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The Second Advent



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THE
SECOND ADVENT,

ETC. ETC.

VOL. II.

THE
SECOND ADAMANT

ETC. ETC.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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THE
SECOND ADVENT;

OR, THE
GLORIOUS EPIPHANY

OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST:

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO ELUCIDATE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,
THE PROPHECIES
BOTH OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

WHICH RELATE
TO THE APPROACHING APPEARANCE OF THE REDEEMER, AND "THE
MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD"—TO THE JUDGMENT
OF THE APOSTATE NATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH—
THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL—
AND THE ERECTION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH.

BY THE REV. JOHN FRY, B.A.

(Late of University College, Oxford,)

RECTOR OF DESFORD, IN LEICESTERSHIRE;

*Author of a "New Translation and Exposition of the Canticles;" "Expository
Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans;" and of a "New
Translation and Exposition of the Psalms," &c.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

"There is scarce a prophecy in the Old Testament concerning Christ, which doth not in something or other relate to his second coming."—SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

"Whom the heavens must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—*Acts*, iii. 21.

"Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"—*Luke*, xviii. 8.

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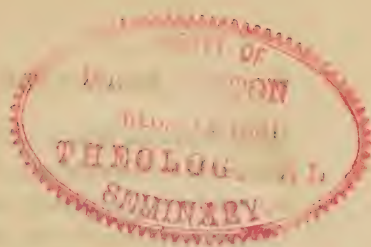
ERRATA.

VOL. I.

- Page 60, for ~~רנמ~~, read ~~רנמ~~.
— 132, for ~~החמודה~~, read ~~החמודה~~.
— 195, for “cavum volis,” read “cavum, valis.”
— —, for “volis valima,” read “valis valium.”
— 205, for ~~החורם~~, read ~~החורם~~.
— 304, for “depository,” read “depository.”
— 406, for “one,” read “me.”
— 485, for “nations,” read “nation.”
— 517, for “ascend,” read “descend.”

VOL. II.

- 37, for “scriptural,” read “spiritual.”
— 39, for “building,” read “buildings.”
— 287, for “workers,” read “mockers.”
— 408, for “states,” read “state.”



THE

SECOND ADVENT, &c.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

SECTION XVII.

The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar, in the Second Chapter of Daniel.

AMONG the prophets of the era of the captivity, Daniel will of course claim our particular attention. In searching the divine oracles for intimations of the second advent of the Redeemer, and of the establishment of his glorious kingdom, the writings of this prophet will afford us much information, especially in enabling us to connect the history of that kingdom with the general history of the world. Daniel was cotemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and seems to have been made an instrument of the divine Spirit before the latter prophet entered on his office, though his last prophecies fall some years later than the last visions of Ezekiel.

The first occasion of Daniel's exercising his prophetic office, was his being brought forward to interpret

the well-known dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian monarch.* Respecting this dream, Daniel is commissioned to say expressly, that "the God of heaven, that revealeth secrets," "had made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what should be in the latter days:" we shall expect, therefore, the same subject, which has from the beginning been the great theme of prophecy, to be again brought before us; for we know already, that the coming of the Redeemer, and the establishment of his glorious kingdom, on the destruction of the adversaries of his people, are the great events of the latter days.

The dream which, though forgotten, had made such an impression upon the king, Daniel reminds him, was this:—

"Thou, O king, sawest; and, behold, a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass: his legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay. Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands," [or, which was not in hands, †] which smote the image upon its feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

"This," says the prophet, "is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king."

"Thou, O King, art a King of kings; for the God of heaven

* Supposed to have been about the year 603 before Christ; according to Dr. Hales, 569.

† Margin.

hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory : and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all ; thou art this head of gold."

Nebuchadnezzar's empire was intended to be symbolized by this head of gold ; and an idea of its great riches, of its splendour, its power, and its universal extension, is conveyed by the language of the prophet. The antiquity of this empire is so great, indeed, that its particular events are almost beyond the reach of authentic history independent of the Scriptures. But what remains of the account of Babylon, and her great king, in profane history, certainly speaks for a magnificence, and majesty of regal authority, perhaps, not to be compared with any thing the world has since beheld. Great, however, as was the empire of Babylon, it was of short duration. Daniel saw its fall, which took place about the year before Christ 538,* sixty-five years after the date of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Daniel's interpretation proceeds : " And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." This explained the symbol of the image's " breast and arms of silver." The event proved that this was the Persian dominion, whose greatness began to be established by Cyrus. It continued for about two hundred years, reaching down a little more than a hundred and twenty years beyond the close of the Old Testament.¹

" And another third kingdom of brass, that shall bear rule over all the earth." This the event has shown to be

* Or, according to Dr. Hales, 536.

¹ " It lasted 205 years, from B. C. 536, to the battle of Arbela, the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, B. C. 331."—DR. HALES.

the Grecian empire, established by the conquests of Alexander the Great. Having destroyed the Persian power, he took Babylon, B. C. 330. The Grecian dominion continued for some time in the hands of his successors, but was finally absorbed in the spreading empire of the all-conquering Romans.¹ No remnant of independent authority was left at the commencement of the Christian era. This, then, was the third kingdom, which answered to the "belly and thighs of brass;" and the Roman can alone be the fourth kingdom, answering to the iron legs.

40. "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

The history of the Roman empire, with which my readers are of course well acquainted, will fully illustrate, and show the accomplishment of this part of the prophet's interpretation.

But we are called to notice a particular event in the latter history of this empire, of great importance to our subject, because it delineates the exact situation of the world, when the final catastrophe shall take place:—

41. "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided: but there shall be in it of the strength of iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay: and as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay; so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken," or, "brittle: and whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle them-

¹ "It lasted 163 years, to the conquest of the first kingdom, *Egypt*, by the *Romans*, B. C. 30." *Macedon*, B. C. 168; and 300 years to the conquest of the last, —DR. HALES.

selves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

The history of the declining days of the Roman power, already applied by so many able expositors of prophecy to this subject, can alone explain this. The empire was to be divided, but still to subsist. It was to be fairly divided, but still its parts were to remain unsevered. Some connexion there was to be, the image is yet entire, and stands on its feet; but its incongruous materials are ill cemented together, and all attempts to unite them more perfectly would fail.

The division of the Roman empire in the eastern and western empires, has been thought by some to fulfil the first part of this prophetic representation; but, on a careful review of what has been advanced for this interpretation, certainly improperly. All the regions that composed the eastern empire were conquests, and no part of the original Roman empire, as it came in contact with the remains of the prophetic kingdoms which preceded it. These regions had for the most part belonged to the Grecian or Macedonian empire. In the language of a subsequent prophecy, they formed "the body" of this kingdom when "its dominion was taken away." Now, "the *body* of the fourth empire" was evidently the western nations alone; the conquest, indeed, of one city had for the most part united these together; but they had no name previously among the civilized kingdoms of the earth. Rome may be justly said to have enclosed and civilized them, from a state of uncultivated barbarism. When thus consolidated, these nations formed that powerful empire, which, treading in the steps of the former conquerors of the world, in real power exceeded them all, and broke all their remnants in pieces. It is then beyond

all doubt in the western, or Roman empire proper, that we are to look for the division here predicted: and the division of this empire by the northern invaders, all my readers will know, is one of the most remarkable events in history. These northern barbarians (Gog and Magog)* from whom all the royal and noble families, and not a small portion of the population of modern Europe, have sprung, may be properly said to have *divided* the Roman empire among them. They did not destroy it, nor dissolve it; but portioned it out among them. Separate and independent sovereignties arose in the midst of it, but the great body of the empire was still held together by a common civilization, similar customs and manners; and, at length, by a common religion, and similar institutions of government. These peculiarities have always kept the great mass of Roman civilization distinct from the other nations of the earth.

The reader of history will often have occasion also to remark how well the symbol of "the iron that cannot mix with clay," which renders the fabric "partly weak, and partly strong," represents the present condition of this empire. Though held together in a certain sense, every effort to establish an universal monarchy in Europe has failed; the iron would not mix with clay: and though the long continued practice of intermarrying between the reigning houses of Europe seemed likely in the natural course of things, sooner or later, to unite so many into one, as to give it an irresistible superiority over the rest, yet this has never been accomplished; "they have mingled themselves with the seed of men, but they could not cleave one to another."

* See Ezekiel.

“Partly strong, and partly weak,” will also well apply, whether we have respect to the exercise of civil and political power by the constituted authorities over their subjects, or to the impression that the combined efforts of the European princes have made without, on other nations of the world. In both these senses the history of Europe, since the decline of the empire, will afford instances of such inconsistent feebleness and power united, as, perhaps, the history of no other empire affords, after the unity of its government has been destroyed.

“And in the days of these kings,” or literally from the original Chaldee, “in their days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.”

It is of the utmost importance to ascertain to whom the words, “these kings,” refer; because, in their days, the kingdom of God, which can be no other than that of the Messiah, of which we have already heard so much, is to be set up. No *kings*, indeed, have been mentioned before; but the prophecy had just declared, that in its last state the fourth kingdom would be divided. If divided, there would then be *kings*, or independent sovereignties. It were, therefore, fair to conclude, that the kings, or governments, of this divided empire, is intended by “these kings,” and subsequent prophecies have rendered this deduction certain. It is, therefore, in the days of these kings of the divided Roman empire, that we are to look for the setting up of God’s kingdom, and not before. The “kingdom,” therefore, does not mean the peaceful progress of the victorious Gospel, which calls together the elect of God, and makes them ready as a people prepared for the Lord; but it means the actual reign of Messiah, of which we have read so much in

the former prophets. The "stone cut out of the mountain without hands," or, "which is not in hands," does not, therefore, symbolize the blessed Jesus in the lowly and mournful achievements of the first advent; but it symbolizes his sudden and glorious appearing in the latter days, when he comes, not to suffer the penalty of death, but to destroy the enemies of his people, and the destroyers of the earth.

"The stone smote the image upon his feet, which were of iron and clay," and brake them to pieces. The *Gospel church* comes not into conflict with the existing authorities of the kingdoms of men. Its Master has ordered the most entire submission in his people to "the powers that be;" even to the sovereign authority of this very fourth empire, which existed when he was upon earth; and which was then the inveterate persecutor of him and of his followers, and was long to be known in that character.

Again, we are to remark, that the symbolical stone comes not into conflict with the ruling powers of the earth, till the fourth empire is seen to exist in its divided state — the stone "smote the image on its feet, that were of iron and clay." But, at the first promulgation of the Gospel, and for centuries afterwards, the empire was entire, and existed in all its iron hardness, and irresistible power. Here is, therefore, plainly portrayed the great conflict of the latter days, so often foretold in the former prophets; and the violent and complete destruction of the whole fabric of human power and sovereignty, as represented in the symbol before us, well agrees with their predictions of the same events.

"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the

gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them."

The result, too, of this mighty conflict is that which has ever been foretold by the oracles of God. The same hand that inflicts the destined vengeance upon the holders and abusers of the sovereign authorities takes to itself its great power, and rules over the nations upon earth.

"And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."—44. "In the days of those kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom," or "the kingdom thereof,"—as I understand it, "the sovereignty over mankind,—shall not be left to another people."*

No nation shall succeed to the Romans, as the Romans succeeded the Greeks, the Greeks the Persians, and the Persians the Babylonians; "but it," the symbolical stone, "shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."† It is true, as we have learned, Israel will have a pre-eminence over the other nations of the earth in the period which is to follow the destruction of the last kingdom of men; but we have discovered, not in the character of the sovereigns of mankind, but only as the chosen keepers of the sanctuary of the Elohim of Israel, their King, and the King of the whole earth. It is "God" himself "that ariseth to inherit all nations."

Thus we learn, that four great empires, the first of

* Psalms ii.; xlvii.; lxxii.; Isaiah, xxxii. 1, &c.; Jer. iii. 17; xxiii. 3; xxx. 9; Zeph. iii. 14, 15.

† Micah, iv.

which was then in existence, and had the seat of its dominion at Babylon, were to rule the destinies of mankind; that is to say, of the civilized world, of those nations, more especially, in whose concerns the church of God would be interested. These four empires were in succession to obtain dominion over the world; but no others were to be expected: the fourth kingdom was to give place only to the long promised kingdom of the Messiah. How important is it to those who are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be supplied with this chart of prospective history, especially to us at this present day, who see the fourth empire actually existing in its last state, divided, yet unsevered, waiting the smiting of the stone that shall level it with the dust.¹

¹ Very remarkable, when we consider the age in which he wrote, at the beginning of the fifth century, are the observations of the historian, Sulpicius Severus, quoted in Bishop Newton. He is giving an account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream:—"The iron legs are the fourth kingdom, and that is the Roman, the strongest of all kingdoms before it. But the feet, part of iron and part of clay, prefigure the Roman empire to be divided as that it should never unite again, which is equally fulfilled: forasmuch as the Roman

territory is occupied by foreign nations and rebels; and we see barbarous nations mixed with our armies, cities, and provinces. But in the 'stone cut out without hands' we have a figure of Christ: for he shall reduce this world, in which are the kingdoms of the earth, to nothing, and shall establish another everlasting kingdom, of which alone the faith of some is still dubious, and they will not credit future things when they are convinced of the past."—*Diss.* vol. i.

SECTION XVIII.

Daniel's Vision of the Four Empires, Chapter vii.

ABOUT fifty years* after Daniel had interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, a vision was revealed to the prophet himself, which, with some enlargement of particulars, gave a prophetic representation of the same four earthly empires, succeeded by a fifth, a kingdom which the God of heaven should set up.

1. "In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and the visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. 2. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heavens strove upon the great sea; 3. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it: 5. And, behold, another beast, a second like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6. After this I beheld, and, lo, another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7. After this, I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there

* About 555 before Christ, or, according to Dr. Hales, 558.

12 DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR EMPIRES.

were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. And I beheld till the thrones were cast down,"—or, 'till thrones were placed.' 9. "And the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire: 10. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13. I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Such was the repeated prophecy respecting the four kingdoms to be succeeded by the kingdom of the Messiah. But let us attend to the angel's interpretation:—

15. "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things."

Daniel was aware that what he saw had no reality in themselves—they were mere visionary appearances; but he well knew that they were all prophetic symbols of something hereafter to exist: he wished, therefore, to

learn their *true* interpretation. The angel explained to him:—

17. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

From a comparison of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we perceive that "king" does not denote an individual monarch, but the sovereign authority of a state or empire lodged in the hands of a succession of monarchs, or, we might add, of rulers of any other description. We have already learned what these empires were, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. The reader will consult the expositors of prophecy, to see how well the symbolical beasts in the vision represent the respective characters and leading transactions of these nations. We hear the general result:—

"The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom."

The consecrated ministers of the Elohim of Israel shall take the kingdom:¹ the kingdom evidently formerly possessed by Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman powers; that is, universal dominion over the earth, "and possess it for ever."

We are fully informed, from the ancient oracles already consulted, who these saints of the Most High are, that in the latter day are to rule upon earth.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," or, "with his holy myriads," &c.

¹ Or, as some would render, that is, which come from on high, "the saints of the high places," "shall take the kingdom."

14 DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR EMPIRES.

" Let Israel rejoice in HIM that made him,
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king.

The exaltation of Elohim is on their lips,
And a two-edged sword in their hands ;

To execute vengeance on the nations,
Chastisements on the peoples ;

To bind their kings in chains,
Their nobles in fetters of iron ;

To execute on them the judgment written :
Such honour have all his beloved. *

" I have appointed my holy ones, I have also called ' them,'
Strong in my wrath, exulting in my majesty.

The sound of a noise in the mountains like that of a great
people,

The sound of a stir of kingdoms, nations assembling.

Jehovah Sabaoth is mustering the host for the battle,
They come from a land afar off, from the extremity of the
heavens ;

Jehovah, and the instruments of his anger, to destroy the
whole earth. †

These saints of the Most High are to take the kingdom, or supreme authority over the world, from the fourth empire, the last that is " of the earth." The symbols which represent this empire, and that show its catastrophe, may well, therefore, fix our chief attention, as it did that of the prophet Daniel.

19. " Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass, which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet ; 20. And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other that came up, and before whom three fell ; even of the horn that had

* Psalm cxlix. † Isaiah, xiii. 3.

eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;¹ 22. Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces."

The fourth kingdom, or universal monarchy, as the event has shown, is the Roman empire. Every one of my readers will be sufficiently acquainted with the history of this people, to recollect in what particulars, both as to its form of government and as to other of its institutions, it was different from all the empires which had preceded it: he will know, also, how well the language of the interpreter applies to the victories and conquests of Rome.

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise. 24. And another shall rise after them, and shall be diverse from the first, and shall subdue three kings."

The fourth empire, as we learned before, was to be divided; not destroyed, like the former empires, but to be divided, and exist in this divided state. Its parts, though disunited, were not to be separated. The empire was still to exhibit a continuance of the same power and civil polity. This, as we have seen, came to pass when the northern nations "parcelled out" the Roman empire among themselves. These nations invaded the empire, and settled within it. They did not annex the different parts on which they had seized to their original and

¹ Perhaps עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה is understood before עַד יְיָ.

native states, so as to dissolve the empire : they did not *more* subdue the members of the Roman empire by their arms, than the Roman empire subdued them by its superior arts of civilization : so that, though they divided the sovereignty of the empire into independent states, themselves and their new states were still held together by an indissoluble bond ; and a marked line of separation was still kept up between them and all other nations of the world. Roman arts, manners, laws, and customs, and at length a common *Roman* religion, still kept the dis-united members of the Roman empire from entirely separating from each other. As seen from without, the grand confederacy of European princes and states, the "European family" or "commonwealth," as it has been called, still continues the power which Rome first consolidated, and still claims that same superiority over the nations of the earth, and that influence over their destinies, which Rome once exercised. The claim must be acknowledged to be substantial, though the efforts by which it has been maintained since the decline and disunion of the empire, as the prophecy foretold, have been "partly strong and partly weak."

To symbolize this new state of things in the latter period of this fourth empire, the vision represents ten horns growing out of the beast on one of its heads. These are explained to be "ten kings," or sovereignties, "that shall arise." Now, it appears from history, that there were ten principal kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. I quote the remarks of a late expositor : — "The historian, Machiavel, whom I cannot but consider as the best, because the most unprejudiced judge of the manner in which the *Roman empire* was divided, very undesignedly (as Bishop Chandler remarks,)

little thinking what he was a doing, reckons up *the ten primary kingdoms* as follows: 1. The Ostrogoths, in Mœsia; 2. The Visigoths, in Pannonia; 3. The Sueves and Alans, in Gascoigne and Spain; 4. The Vandals, in Africa; 5. The Franks, in France; 6. The Burgundians, in Burgundy; 7. The Heruli and Turingi, in Italy; 8. The Saxons and Angles, in Britain; 9. The Huns, in Hungary; and, 10. The Lombards, at first upon the Danube, afterwards in Italy. The selfsame catalogue is exhibited by that excellent chronologer, Bishop Lloyd.”¹ Nor will the account of Mr. Gibbon, in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, be found to differ materially from the above.*

It is from these nations, the “*Gog and Magog*” of Ezekiel, with the remnants of the original population, the descendants of *Gomer*, Chittim, Tarshish, &c. that the present European nations within the boundaries of the empire are descended. It is among these nations that we are to look for this eleventh kingdom, the “little horn” that was to arise “after them” and “among them.” Now, it is an unquestionable and a very leading fact in the history of these divided parts of the Roman empire, that after the ten primary kingdoms, there has arisen an eleventh power, different from the others, which has attained to great eminence and consequence,—the papal government under the popes of Rome. Most Protestant writers have, accordingly, pointed out this power as the little horn of Daniel’s vision; and the

¹ Faber, after Bishop Newton, in a note to *Calmet, Berengand, Bossuet, and Du Pin*.
Romanists themselves, and refers

* Vol. vi. p. 403, oct.

18 DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR EMPIRES.

evidence by which this interpretation is supported, appears to be clear and satisfactory.

First, in the symbol he is described as a little horn, coming up, as it should seem, by insensible degrees, among the other horns; for the prophet did not at first perceive it: it was only while he was fixing his attention on the first ten horns, that he perceived an eleventh growing up. This exactly describes the rise of the papal power. As a power, compared to the other governments, it was always small, though it has achieved great things, and boasted greater. The pope, at first, as my readers know, was no more than the Christian bishop of Rome; and possessed no more power or authority than other bishops, except what he derived from the greatness and celebrity of the imperial city over which his see extended. By degrees, however, he came to be of great importance in the world; till, at length, we behold him in the character of one of the acknowledged sovereign powers of Europe. Here then is the little horn of the fourth beast, that ariseth after the first ten.

— 24. “And he shall be diverse from the first.”

— So clearly is the papal power — very different from the other sovereignties of Europe. The dominion of the powers symbolized by the first horns was a temporal dominion, won, defended, and exercised by the sword. But the chief authority of the little horn was spiritual — an authority acquiesced and maintained over the erroneous consciences of men, by craft and imposture, and by the abuse of religious institutions. In this respect he was diverse from the first.

Again, it is shown in the vision, that “he was to subdue three kings” — “before this little horn three of the

first horns were plucked up by the roots.”* “Accordingly we find,” says Mr. Faber, “that *the kingdom of the Heruli, the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and the kingdom of the Lombards*, were successively eradicated before the *little papal horn*; which, at length, became a *temporal*, as well as a *spiritual* power, at the expense of these three depressed *primary* states.

1. “In the year 476, Odoacer, king of the Heruli, put an end to the western empire, and caused himself to be proclaimed *King of Italy*. By this conquest he stood ‘before,’ or in the way of, *the papal horn*; whence it was necessary that *his regal horn* should be plucked up, in order to make room for the future aggrandizement of the *spiritual kingdom of the pope*. This was effected in the year 493,† by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths.” He conquered Italy, and “was accepted as the deliverer of Rome by the senate and people.”

2. “This *second of the three horns*, however, standing equally in the way of papal aggrandizement, was destined, like its immediate predecessor, to fall before *the little horn*.” This was effected by the general of the Greek emperor, and the Lombards.‡

3. But these same Lombards, *the third of the three horns*, in consequence became a powerful kingdom, standing equally in the way of the increase of the popedom; and was, therefore, to be plucked up by the roots before it. This the pope contrived to accomplish, by calling to his assistance Pepin and Charlemagne, kings of France. Charlemagne, “entering Italy with a large army, completely eradicated *the horn of Lombardy*, and bestowed

* Ver. 8.

† Dr. Hales, 488.

‡ A. D. 553.—Idem.

great part of its dominions upon the successors of St. Peter; for such the popes feign themselves to be." * †

Such is Mr. Faber's interpretation of this part of the prophecy. Mr. Frere has proposed a territorial division of the empire, in order to show the three kingdoms subdued by the little horn; and his scheme has, perhaps, some advantages. "The western Roman empire, as bounded on the north by the Danube and the Rhine, is divisible exactly into ten parts; all of which, excepting two that perished early, have existed for nearly the whole period of the divided state of the empire. Of these the three first are Lombardy, which was the seat of a powerful kingdom; Ravenna, which was the seat of the Exarch, who ruled over a great part of Italy; and Rome, which was formerly the seat of the empire. The addition of Naples and Tuscany to these three, forms a complete territorial division of Italy into five parts: the five other kingdoms are France, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and Britain." It is needless to remark, that the three first of these compose "the territories of the popedom." It might be remarked also, that the greater importance of Italy, in these early ages, may reconcile us to the apparent disproportion of its territorial divisions, when compared to the *Transmontine* parts of the empire. The history of the subduing of these three kingdoms will then be as follows: about A. D. 730, the pope, in support of his images, heads the revolt of the Romans, and becomes eventually their sovereign. In 755, by the help of Pepin, he takes Ravenna from the Exarch: and in 774, by the help of Charlemagne, becomes possessed of part of Lombardy. ‡

* A. D. 756.

† Faber.

‡ Mr. Mede, Sir Isaac, and Bishop Newton, make the same enumeration of the states merged in the papacy.

On either hypothesis, has the prophecy been fulfilled. The papal power is this "little horn," that has "subdued three kings:" and, as if compelled by the hand of Providence, the popes exhibit a public proof of this, whenever they put on their regalia, or royal ornaments; for a part of these is the *triple crown*, or three crowns formed into one—a most remarkable circumstance, which, of course, has escaped no sound expositor of prophecy.

Daniel further tells us respecting this little horn, in his account of his vision: "And, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." This last particular the angel explains, "He shall speak great words against," or, "in opposition to, on the contrary side of, the Most High."*

The "eyes of a man," may naturally be supposed to symbolize the character which this power should assume, which is that of UNIVERSAL BISHOP, OR OVERSEER OF THE WHOLE WORLD. "The eyes" may also denote the nature of the papal government. What other governments have effected by force of arms, the court of Rome has accomplished by a vigilant and cunning policy, always on the watch to seize and profit by the occasion. The whole history of modern Europe may serve as a comment on this text.

"And he shall speak words against," or, "in opposition to the Most High." This is but too well made out in history, by what it records of the arrogant and blasphemous pretensions of the popes. "Who," says Bishop Newton, "hath been more noisy and blustering than the pope, especially in former ages; boasting of his supremacy, thundering out his bulls and anathemas, excom-

* Ver. 25.

municating princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance? ‘*His look was more stout than his fellows:*’ and the pope assumes a superiority, not only over his fellow-bishops, but even over crowned heads; and requires his feet to be kissed, and greater honours to be paid to him than to kings and emperors themselves.”—“Setting up himself above all laws, human and divine, arrogating to himself godlike attributes and titles of *holiness*, and infallibility; exacting obedience to his ordinances and decrees in preference to, and in open violation of reason and Scripture, insulting men, and blaspheming God. He was even wont to receive the title of *God upon earth*, and to accept adoration sitting upon the altar or communion table; and in ten thousand instances have the popes ‘made the word of God of no effect,’ that they might keep their traditions, which they have received to hold.”* These spiritual tyrants have, indeed, entirely changed the constitution of the church, its rites and ceremonies, its sacraments, and some of its essential doctrines; so that the face of the church is entirely altered from what it was under the apostles and primitive fathers—“and he shall think,” or, “devise, to change times and laws.”

Another characteristic of this novel power symbolized by the little horn is pointed out, that of *persecutor* of the consecrated servants of God; “And I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.”† The angel says:—

“And he shall wear out the saints of the Most High;—

“shall grievously afflict and persecute them.”‡ The

* Bishop Newton.

† Ver. 21, and ver. 25.

‡ בלע is rendered waste, 1 Chron. xvii. 9.

cruel and bloody persecutions, which the popes have carried on against Christians of all descriptions, who refused to submit to their usurped authority, to their blasphemous pretensions, and idolatrous superstitions, are facts most notorious in history. Many thousands of the saints of God have, in short, been persecuted to death, by the authority or influence of the popes; far greater numbers, indeed, than had perished under the heathen emperors.

The angel informs Daniel, that “they,” “the saints of the Most High,” or, “the times and laws”—or both, “shall be delivered into his hand for a time and times, and the dividing of times.” We have the concurrent opinion of all commentators of eminence, that this period designates three prophetic years and a half, a day standing for a year;* so that we have one thousand two hundred and sixty years, assigned for the reign of the papal power—for the period of its holding in its hand “times and laws.” Which period terminates,† as some expositors understand it, with the coming of the Ancient of days, when the fiery judgment takes place, the whole beast is destroyed, and the kingdom of the saints established.‡

Others,|| however, see in the words of the prophecy, an intimation of the gradual subversion of the papal power, previously to the destruction of the body of the beast by fire.—“And they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it even to the end.”§ And these expositors conceive, that the period of twelve hundred and sixty years reaches only to the *commence-*

* Indeed we have a key to this in Ezekiel, iv. 6. “I have appointed thee each day for a year.”

† Ver. 22.

‡ Bishop Newton.

|| Mr. Cuninghame.

§ Ver. 26.

ment of this judgment. But this question, and all considerations of the era when we are to begin to date this period, I shall reserve for the further light which subsequent prophecies may afford. Suffice it to observe, that it is certain, whatever be the peculiar fate of the papacy, the destruction of the fourth empire is sudden and complete, as represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and gives place at once to the succeeding kingdom of saints:—"I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." It may be argued, indeed, from the former part of the verse,* that the destruction is brought upon it, "because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake."¹ If this be correct, popery is the damning sin of the fourth empire, and must exist and retain influence till the last; or, to anticipate future prophecy, the power symbolized by the little horn is only destroyed in the last conflict.

Some ambiguity rests also on the following verse,† "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion

* Ver. 11.

† Ver. 12.

¹ "The former part of this verse is not in the Syriac version; and I suspect the second word in the verse should be *הוֹרִית*. If this be admitted, we should render thus, "Looking at the beast at this time, because of the voice—I was attentive till the beast was slain."—WINTLE. I should conceive, it ought not to be for certain concluded, that the full triumph of the little horn continues

until the Ancient of days doth come; but that it is probable before *וְעַד*, in the beginning of the 22d verse, we are to understand *וְעַד הָרִיב*, as in the 9th verse, and as in the 21st; we shall then render, "I was looking, and this horn made war with the saints; and he prevailed against them," or, "overcame them." *I was looking*, until the Ancient of days did come, &c.

taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." This may signify, the judgment of the three former empires, at the time of their respective overthrow by their successful opponents, will be very different from this of the fourth empire. They lost their dominion; but the people themselves, with their territories, were not immediately consigned to destruction: but the fourth empire loses, at the same time, its dominion and its existence; it is burned with fire. Or the passage may mean, when this dreadful catastrophe shall happen to the nations that compose the fourth empire, the nations that had formerly composed the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Grecian empires, shall still survive; but all the dominion they once possessed shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

There can therefore, upon the whole, from what we have considered, be no doubt that this fourth, or Roman empire, in its divided state, with its little horn, are—"the ungodly" of Enoch's prophecy—"the foolish nation," Israel's last adversary, of the song of remembrance—the foe from "Chittim" of Balaam's prophecy—the same great adversary, which is so often predicted in the Psalms and in Isaiah, and in the other prophets; whose destruction by the sword of Jehovah, and by flaming fire, has always been shown to be the prelude to the manifestation of the long promised kingdom of the Messiah. We may repeat the exclamation found in Ezekiel, on the invasion of Gog and Magog, "*Art thou not he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them?*"*

* Chap. xxxviii. 17.

The latter part of the vision, the symbols of "the Ancient of Days," and of "one like the Son of Man, who comes with the clouds of heaven," will next require our attention. "And I beheld till the thrones were cast down," which might mean the thrones of the kings mentioned. But as the word "thrones" is not in a state of emphasis, we should probably render, "till thrones, or seats, were placed, or set, or laid down;"¹ that is, for the Most High and his saints, who were coming to judge the fourth empire.

"And the Ancient of Days did sit."

This was an emblem, no doubt, of the Most High, but not, I think, of the person of the Father. A representation of HIS person is incongruous with every declaration of holy writ. HE is invisible, "whom no man hath seen or can see." But there is "an image of the invisible God:" "The Son who is in the bosom of the Father; HE declares" or "manifests him." This, then, must be the DIVINE BEING represented by THE ETERNAL, sitting in judgment. This same judgment is also, in other prophecies, ascribed to the personal achievement of the Redeemer; and though it may appear, at first sight, improbable that we should find in the same vision two symbols of the same person, for "the likeness of a Son of Man," "coming with the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom," is unquestionably a symbol of the Redeemer; yet I think that the improbability is far less than in the supposition of a representation of God the Father, a supposition so discountenanced by other Scriptures. I conceive, therefore, that the former emblem

¹ See Note in Bishop Newton.

represents the Lord Jesus coming "in his Father's glory" as Judge: the other represents our Lord as coming "in his own glory" to receive his promised kingdom. The appearance of the Judge is very like the former prophetic representations given us of the "God of Israel," or "his Holy One," or "the Redeemer," revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance:—

"His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."*

After this judgment of the fourth empire, another scene of the vision is disclosed:—

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him."

Whether the Ancient of Days be another emblem of himself, or of the judgment of God abstractedly, which himself had executed by his commission, this "likeness of the Son of Man," or "of a child of man," is certainly a prophetic symbol of the Messiah, who, on the destruction of the fourth empire, comes to receive his promised kingdom.

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

As the angel interprets:—

* Compare Psalms xi. 6; xxi. 9; lxviii.; xcvi.; Isaiah, xxx. 27; xxxiii. 10, 11, 12; xxxiv. 9, 10; lxvi. 16; Zeph. i. 14.

27. "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High,"—or 'the people of saints of the Most High,'—"whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Here we observe the individual symbolized by "the likeness of the Son of Man" is declared to be "the MOST HIGH;" for HIS is the supreme dominion; his people, his consecrated servants, are, as has ever been represented, partners of his throne and kingdom; but he is "the KING of kings, and LORD of lords;" the Lord from heaven with his holy myriads: *

SECTION XIX.

The Vision of the Ram and He-Goat, Chapter viii.

ABOUT two years† after the last vision appeared to Daniel, it pleased God to give him a new revelation of what should be hereafter. The last vision went over the same ground as Nebuchadnezzar's dream, predicting four great empires to bear rule in succession upon earth. These were to give place to a fifth, the promised kingdom of Messiah. Daniel's vision, however, enlarged upon the history of the fourth empire in its last, divided state, and discovered to us a power of a singular description, symbolized by "a little horn," which should be chiefly instrumental, by its excesses, in bringing on the destruction of the beast, the special object of the Re-

* Compare Deut. xxxiii. 2; 1 Sam. ii.; Psalm lxxviii. 17; Isaiah, xxv.; xxvi.; Micah, ii. 13.

† B. C. 553. Dr. Hales, 556.

deemer's vengeance when he should appear. The vision now to be considered reviews a part of the former history, in order to show the rise of another peculiar power, which was to grow out of one of the empires, and whose rise and fall would much concern the people of God in the latter days. This power, like the papacy, is symbolized by "a little horn," and we shall find the symbol to denote, what from a general recollection of history we should expect—the Mahometan power.

The first, or Babylonian empire, was now so nearly expired, that the present vision takes no notice of it, but begins with the second, or Persian. Having shown the conflicts of this power with the third, or Grecian empire, which overthrows it—without proceeding to the fourth kingdom, the history of which was so fully developed in the last vision—the prophecy proceeds immediately to the description of this new power, which is to stand on the ruins of the third empire, and to become of great consequence in the latter ages. Daniel thus relates his vision:—

3. "Then I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram, which had two horns; and the two horns were high, but one was higher than the other; and the higher came up last: 4. And I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great."

20. "The ram which thou sawest,"—the heavenly interpreter explains to the prophet,—“the ram which thou sawest, having two horns, is the king of Media and Persia.”

I refer to Bishop Newton, and the other expositors of prophecy, to show how well the symbol represents the chief transactions of this empire.

5. "And as I was considering, behold, a he-goat came from the west, on the face of the earth, and touched not the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes: 6. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7. And I saw him close upon the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was none that could deliver out of his hand. Therefore the he-goat waxed very strong; and when he was strong the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven."

This is thus interpreted by the angel:—

21. "The rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22. Now, that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."

I refer to the before mentioned writer, and general history, to prove how all this exactly describes the progress of Alexander the Great—his conflict with Darius, the Persian king—his death in the midst of his conquests—and the final division of his dominions between four of his generals: Macedon and Greece, in the west, to Cassander; Thrace and Bithynia, in the north, to Lysimachus; Egypt, in the south, to Ptolemy; and Syria, with the eastern provinces, to Seleucus. So far this vision only goes over the ground of the former: the above is but an enlarged view of the history of the second and third beasts of the last vision; the powers symbolized by the silver and brass in Nebuchadnezzar's image: but the chief design of this new vision is to show the concern which a power, to arise out of one of these divisions

of the third empire, is to have in the transactions of the last days. This the interpreter plainly intimates:—

17. “Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end shall be the vision:” or rather, as we may translate the angel’s words, “For, or respecting the time of the end, is the vision.”

That is, it is designed to show what shall take place in very remote ages towards the END,—the end which the coming of Christ shall put to the revolutions of human kingdoms, as was shown in the former visions. The part of the vision already considered, however, related to events not very distant in time. Even the dividing of the Grecian kingdom took place within two hundred and fifty years after the date of this prophecy. It is, therefore, in what follows, in the new part of the prophecy, that we are to see a symbol of more remote events—of events that touch upon the very advent of Messiah’s kingdom.

9. “And out of one of them” [of the four horns of the he-goat] “came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land: 10. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them: 11. Yea, he magnified himself against the prince of the host, and by him,” or, “from him, the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. 12. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression,¹ and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered.”

This is thus interpreted by the angel:—

¹ “By reason of revolt.”—FABER.

23. "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when transgressions are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24. And his power shall be mighty, but [or, and] not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people," or, "the strong ones and the people of the saints," "and through his policy shall he cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by [or, in] peace shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand."

"In the latter time of their kingdom," the interpreter tells the prophet, "this little horn" is to arise. This expression might, indeed, be understood to mean, when these four Grecian kingdoms shall be approaching to their overthrow by the fourth great empire, then shall this little horn arise: but all attempts to show any such power, as that which is here symbolized, among the successors of the Grecian kings, has entirely failed. The Romans themselves could not be, as some have supposed, this little horn of the third beast, for they were the fourth beast, and were truly great and terrible before the latter time of the Grecian successors of Alexander. Their interference in the affairs of these princes was by no means like the symbol of a little horn coming forth out of one of them. It was, in fact, a great nation extending its conquests, in a wide circle, all around, till it reached and subdued them. Besides, if the Roman power be supposed to be here symbolized, the vision, in fact, gives us no further information respecting the events of futurity, especially not of "the time of the end." But the angel expressly says, "for the time of the end is the vision:"—

“ I will make thee know what shall be the last end of the indignation, for at the time appointed the end shall be.”¹

I have only, therefore, to observe, that the expression, “ in the latter time of their kingdom,”² will equally signify “ after these kingdoms;” at some indefinite period after the dominion of the third kingdom shall be taken away, shall this little horn spring up. And the reader will bear in mind, that, according to the representation of the last vision, “ concerning the three first beasts,” they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged “ for a season and time.” So that there is nothing incongruous in the interpretation that the little horn grows out of one of the horns of the he-goat, long after his dominion is destroyed.³

Following, therefore, what seems to be the direction of the angel interpreter, and looking to these latter ages for a power answering to this symbol, we certainly find one,—and one, in some parts of its character, not unlike the other power, symbolized in the last vision by a little horn on the *fourth* beast. It arose, too, about the same time with it, and arose among the nations that had formed, and still form, in the view of prophecy, the body of the *third* beast. This power was no other than the *spiritual empire* founded in the East by Mahomet,⁴

¹ “ The vision shall reach to the time of the end : it shall reach even to the appointed time of the end.”—FABER.

² באחרית מלכותם. Compare under אחר. Or perhaps, in a position “ behind them.”—FABER.

“ Post regnum eorum.”—VULGATE.

³ The expression in the original is מן האחת מהם, which, from the various meanings of the prefixed מ, may, perhaps, be rendered “ out of,” or “ from one—apart from them,” so as not to be of them.

⁴ Whitaker, Faber, and hinted by Bp. Newton, *Dissert.* xvii.

Mohammed, or Muhammed. Like the *papal horn*, this horn was to be, first, small, and afterwards to wax great: such was exactly the rise of the Mahometan power. It originated in the imposture of one man, whose principles were first communicated to one and then to another, till their converts became an immense multitude, and subdued nearly all those countries which had formed the kingdoms of the four horns of the third beast. This little horn is said to come forth out of one of the four horns; that horn we should probably reckon to be the Greeks of Syria, as their influence extended over that part of Arabia from whence Mahomet came. He was by birth an Arabian; but it is probable the Grecian arts, which he had learned by his intercourse with that nation, supplied him with the materials of his imposture. Mahometism was no creature of a wild Arab's brain, formed in the desert: the new religion was evidently, from the early history of the impostor, a scheme that had occurred to the merchant, for such originally was Mahomet, frequenting the fairs of Syria: a monk of the Greek church is said to have been his great accessary.¹

This horn was to "wax exceeding great towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land." The spot where it should rise and flourish seems to be pointed out: it was neither to the north nor to the west of the Holy Land. But it was in these directions that the greatness of Rome increased to reach that country. It grew towards the east, and from its first possessions in Asia took a southern direction, in order to overwhelm the land of Canaan. But the tide here described flows in a contrary direction. "The religion

¹ A Nestorian sectary of the Greek church, at least.

of Mohammed," says Mr. Faber, "was originally small in the number of its proselytes, but it soon waxed exceeding great, and that *in the very line* marked out by the prophecy. Its conquests extended southward over the peninsula of Arabia and Egypt; eastward over Persia, and in after ages over Hindostan;" and *northward*, that is, towards "the pleasant land," meaning the land of Canaan, which was to the north of Mecca, in Arabia, where Mohammed was born: "northward, it extended over Palestine, Asia Minor, and Greece," the countries now forming the Turkish empire. "Some conquests it also made *westward*, but they were neither so permanent nor so considerable as its other acquisitions. Spain soon threw off its tyranny; and the piratical states of Barbary are not worthy to be mentioned with the spiritual sovereignty of Greece, Persia, Syria, Asia Minor, India, Egypt, and Arabia. Hence the prophet truly remarks, that the principal theatre of its greatness should be the *north*, the *south*, and the *east*."¹

This kingdom was to arise, the angel tells us, when "transgressors are come to the full;" literally, "at the perfection of transgressors."² The transgressors referred to, I suppose to be the transgressors of the covenant of their God — the transgressors among the people who possessed the privileges of revealed religion. If our exposition be right, the event has shown this people to be the Gentile churches. Now, the history of the Christian church attests that every corruption of doctrine and of practice had reached its utmost height of depravity in the East, in those parts of Europe and Asia which had

¹ FABER, vol. i. p. 302.

² "When the revolt shall be completed." — FABER.

formed the empire of Alexander and his four successors, about the period when Mahomet arose. "The influences of divine grace," observes Mr. Milner, in his *Church History*, speaking of the time immediately previous to the rise of the Mahometan little horn, "seem to have been withheld in the *East* entirely; men had there filled up the measure of their iniquities."

The angel further explains to Daniel respecting this "little horn:"—"A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." "A king of a fierce"—or rather, "of a firm countenance," denoting the bold effrontery of the *barefaced*, impudent liar,¹—and such were Mahomet and his successors: their religion is in truth the most glaring imposition that was ever imposed upon the credulity of mankind. He was also to be one who "understood"—or rather, "one teaching dark sentences," "poetical enigmas," or "sublime mysterious sayings."² The KORAN, so celebrated in the history of the Mahometan religion, exactly answers to this description. It was by the composition of this book that Mahomet advanced his pretensions to the prophetic office: to impose upon the world the extravagant doctrines of this book, the armies of the impostor conquered with the sword.

"And he shall magnify himself," or, "acquire great power against the host," or "stars of heaven."

The "host" or "stars of heaven" are a very frequent emblem in Scripture for prophets and teachers. The history of Mahometism shows us that the bishops and pastors of the Christian church are here meant. The

¹ עו פנים. ² מבין חידות.

church, indeed, was become most corrupt, and it was for "the sins of the priests and of the people" that this judgment was brought upon it; yet God still acknowledges the Christian nations as his consecrated portion of the earth. In the same manner we may often remark respecting Israel of old: whatever may be the actual state of true religion among the people, or the severe rebukes expressed to them by their God in consequence thereof; yet when Israel is contrasted with the heathen nations around, it is still acknowledged as the heritage of Jehovah.

The mysterious expressions, "and his power shall be mighty, but,"—or rather, "and—not by his own power," can only be explained by the event. The Mahometan little horn was "strong by its own power," the empire of the Saracens, which it formed. It was also strong "by power not its own," by the power of the Turks, who, on the decline of the Saracens, embracing the religion of their prophet, propagated, with more success than ever, the doctrine of the Koran. It was by this power chiefly that it "magnified itself against the host of heaven, and cast down the stars to the ground, and trampled upon them." Numerous sees and churches were now extinguished for ever; the bishops, and clergy, and people were dispersed, and thousands, who had a name only to lose, apostatized, and turned Mahometans. Thus that part of the Christian world which was then, by far, the best peopled and most civilized portion of the earth, and where our holy religion had first been taught and established, became henceforth the dominion of this "little horn:" the churches were either extinguished or reduced to the lowest state of poverty and misery, and that not in a temporal sense only, but also in a Scriptural sense.

It will verify the meaning of the symbol used in this

prophecy — “ the stars of heaven ” — as denoting teachers of religion, to observe, that “ the seven churches of Asia,” mentioned in the Revelation, met their doom on this occasion. Their “ angels,” or “ bishops,” were acknowledged as “ stars ” in the hand of the Great Head of the church : but now the major part of them are cast from their heavens, and shine no longer : “ the candlestick of the church is removed from the sanctuary.”

“ And he shall magnify himself against,” or “ prevail over the prince of the host.” The prince of the host—the host of which we have been speaking, must be the Christian emperor of Constantinople. He, and his prelates and nobles, were those whom the angel, in his interpretation, calls “ the mighty ones and the people of the saints.”

“ And by,” or rather, “ from him,” the prince of the host, “ the daily sacrifice,” or “ continual offering, was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.”

The term we render “ daily sacrifice,” or “ continual offering,” is a term frequently used respecting the daily repeated sacrifices of the Jewish temple, typifying the death of Christ till he should come, and which were, moreover, blessed with a sacramental influence on the heart of the believing Israelite. Now, what this continual burnt-offering was, with respect to Christ’s first coming, such, with respect to his second coming, are the daily offering of prayer and praise, and all the solemnities of the Christian church, as administered by a divinely appointed priesthood ; and especially the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, which celebration is well known in the primitive church to have been daily. These ordinances, as performed in Christian churches,

are a testimony, a continual memorial of the redemption through the blood of Christ; one of them especially, by his own appointment, "shows the Lord's death till he come." It is not, indeed, a sacrificial act; but it may truly be called "a sacrifice of a thanksgiving," a "peace-offering," which is spiritually eaten before the Lord. When, therefore, the Saracens and Turks, by their victories and oppressions, broke up and dispersed the churches of the *East*, destroyed their sacred building, and dispersed the Christian priesthood, this prophecy was fulfilled: and especially when Constantinople itself, the seat of "the prince of the host," the protector and sovereign of the professors of Christ's religion—at least with respect to them that are without—when this metropolis of the Christian empire in the East was taken, and her churches turned into Mahometan mosques, then did the "little horn" take from the "prince of the host" "his continual offering, and cast down his sanctuary."

It is said, in Daniel's account of the vision, "And an host was given him against the 'continual offering,' because of transgression; and it cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered." "Host," we shall naturally suppose, means in this place the same as when it was used in a former verse, a "host of stars," symbolical of the several orders of Christian pastors and ministers. "An host," then, to be given to the little horn, implies, that he too should have his *orders of teachers*, who should oppose and supersede the Christian ministry; "casting the truth to the ground, and silencing their testimony"—the testimony that by their office they were compelled to bear continually to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." The host is said to be given against the "continual offering." That continual me-

morial of the sacrifice of Christ, which was afforded by celebration of the holy mysteries of the Christian worship, though taken away from the prince of the Christians, when his sanctuary was cast down, was of course still kept up in the assemblies of the subdued Greeks. But effectually to counteract this testimony, these new teachers and conductors of the worship of Islam were appointed.

This success of falsehood against truth was owing, indeed, to the transgression of those who should have borne testimony to the truth, not by their office only, but by their doctrine and their lives. It is too clear, however, from the histories of the times, that to the great corruptions, both in doctrine and practice, among the bishops and clergy of the Eastern churches, the success of Mahometism is to be attributed; and that to this cause it is chiefly to be assigned, that *the teachers of the Koran* supplanted *the preachers of the Gospel*, and by their art and policy converted to their faith such multitudes of those nations, over whom their temporal authority had already been extended by the sword. As the angel interprets, "And through his policy also shall he cause craft to prosper in his hand."* The institution of the various orders of Mahometan teachers was his "*policy*." The word may, perhaps, be understood in the sense of "*a scheme*," or, "*means of instruction*."† By this policy he made "his craft," or, as the word may be rendered, "his imposture," to prosper. Thus he became "magnified in his heart," the boasting, successful teacher, proud of his superior knowledge, and of his victories over the silenced defenders of Christianity—thus "by peace did he destroy many." The peaceful dominion of the Mahometans over

* Ver. 25. † על שכל.

the conquered provinces of the Eastern empire, was more destructive to the profession of Christianity than their conquering sword; and by their offer of temporal prosperity to their subjects, they were enabled to destroy it entirely in most parts of their empire.

The angel adds, "He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand." Against the "prince of the host" he should prevail, but the Prince of princes is another person—"The Son of man, when he cometh in his kingdom;" he is "the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Mahometism, therefore, it should seem, like popery, or, at least, like the anti-christian power of the West, will survive till the coming of Christ, and will be a party in that great combination of foes, whom the Redeemer "consumes by the brightness of his appearing." This is confirmed by the description given of the destruction of this "little horn;" "He shall be broken without hands:" that is to say, not by human hands, or the instrumentality of man, as empires are usually overthrown; but this spiritual dominion meets its fate, when the stone cut out "without hands" is dashed against the image, and reduces all the power of the wicked to dust: and we shall remember, that in Ezekiel's enumeration of the armies of Gog, the countries both of the Turkish and of the Persian empires, the two great branches of the Mahometan dominion, are clearly specified. What power or policy shall, on this occasion, combine together the nations, both of the Roman Catholic and of the Mahometan faith, we are not now to inquire; but the fact of such a combination seems to be predicted.

We have one further particular to attend to; the angel concludes by saying: "And the vision of the evening, and of the morning, which was told, is true; wherefore,

shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days." *
"The vision of the evening, and of the morning, which was told," is what is mentioned to Daniel in the thirteenth verse.

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

—Or rather "freed," or "vindicated," by the just judgment of a righteous God; for this is a frequent sense in which the word "justified," the term here employed, is used, especially in the prophetic parts of Scripture. Here the English reader should be informed, that what we render "days," is in the original, "evening and morning." Hence it is that the angel refers to it, as "the vision of the evening and morning." This, he admonishes Daniel, "is true;" but the meaning, as he perhaps may intend to intimate, would not be disclosed for many ages.

"Shut up the vision, for it shall be for many days."

And it is, indeed, but very lately that this vision of the little horn has been at all understood: and whether we yet know enough to determine the dates here given, may justly be doubted; but we may feel the fullest assurance, that the requisite explanation will be one day supplied. The vision is meant to speak at the time appointed, and to give the needful information to the waiting people of God.

The substance of the question of "the first saint"

* Ver. 26.

appears to be, according to that interpretation which events have given to the prophecy, "How long a period shall it be to the *end* of this vision," concerning the triumphing of the Mahometan power over the churches of the East; the desolation brought upon them by their transgression; and especially, perhaps, over "the pleasant land," where it has continued the abomination of desolation first planted by the Romans? The Mahometan nations, it should seem, being the last of those who are to tread Jerusalem under feet; and it is by these the times of the Gentiles are to be fulfilled.

The answer to this question is, "Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be justified." If we ask, what sanctuary? — the first answer that will suggest itself will be, The sanctuary of the prince, which is said in the prophecy to be cast down by the power symbolized by the little horn. To vindicate this sanctuary then, if our exposition be right, would be, to restore the Eastern churches, to vindicate them out of the hands of their polluters. This is the first answer that suggests itself; and I know but one besides. It may be, the Spirit of prophecy has in view the emphatic sanctuary on the holy hills of Jerusalem. The Mahometans now hold these sacred places in their possession; a Turkish mosque at this hour occupies the site of Solomon's temple, where the God of Israel was to put his name for ever. If this suggestion has given the right answer, then, at the period assigned, these holy mountains will be vindicated and restored to their rightful owners: and we know from other prophecies, that before the appearing of the Messiah, this sanctuary will have been put into the hands of the Jews: and what connexion there may be between the vindication

of the Greek church, and the first partial restoration of Israel, time alone can explain.

But the great difficulty which at present seals this prophecy, is our ignorance when we should begin to reckon the two thousand three hundred years. One should naturally have supposed, from the date of the vision; the vision was seen by Daniel, B. C. 553.* But the event has shown this to be wrong, for two thousand three hundred years from this date brings us to A. D. 1747; and the sanctuary has in no sense been cleansed, either in the west, or in the east, or on the holy mountains of Palestine. This has led to the conclusion, that a subsequent epocha must be fixed upon for the commencement of this period.

Bishop Newton has fixed upon the year B. C. 334, the time of Alexander's invasion of Asia; when, according to the vision, the "he-goat came from the west:" "2300 years from that time," he observes, "will bring us towards the conclusion of the sixth millennium of the world; and about that period, according to an old tradition, which was current before our Saviour's time, and was probably founded on the prophecies, great changes and revolutions are to be expected; and particularly, as Rabbi Abraham Sebah saith, 'Rome is to be destroyed, and the Jews restored.'"

Another epocha, that has been suggested for the period of the 2300 years, is the conclusion of Persian greatness in the memorable expedition of Xerxes against Greece, followed soon after by his death. And it is remarkable, that the angel interpreter, in his repetition of this pro-

* Dr. Hales, 556.

phcey, chap. xi. 2, makes a break in his narrative with the unsuccessful exploits of this prince; and immediately, without noticing the intermediate space, or the princes that reigned in the interval, proceeds to describe the appearance of Alexander. So that, as Bishop Newton dates from the ending of this *break* in the narrative of the prophecy, the hypothesis we are now noticing dates from its beginning. This memorable expedition was commenced in B. C. 480, and ended with the battles of Plataea and Mycale, fought on the same day, the 28th or 29th of August, B. C. 479. The Persian war itself, we should probably reckon to have ended with the victories of Cimon at Eurymedon,* B. C. 470; and the reign of Xerxes was closed in the year 464, or 465. If we date from the close of the *expedition* of Xerxes against Greece, the 2300 years will bring us to the year 1821; if from the close of the Persian war, to the year 1830; if from the death of Xerxes, to the year 1836. So that this hypothesis, to its utmost extent, will be soon put to the proof.

These expositions retain the present reading of the text; and, as Dr. Hales has remarked, "There is no number in the Bible, whose genuineness is better ascertained than that of the 2300 days. It is found in all the printed Hebrew editions, in all the MSS. of Kennicott and Dr. Rossi's collations, and in all the *ancient versions*, except the *Vatican* copy of the Septuagint, which reads 2400, followed by *Symmachus*; and some copies noticed by Jerome, which read 2200; both evidently *literal* errors in excess and defect, which compensate each other, and confirm the mean 2300."

The first of these various readings has, however, been

* See STANYAN's *Grecian History*, vol. i. 292.

adopted by Mr. Faber and Mr. Frere. The former of these expositors, dating from the first year of Cyrus, makes his two thousand four hundred years to expire in 1866; the latter, by a far preferable hypothesis, (should this, indeed, be the correct reading,) dates from the 553 B. C., and has thus the advantage of taking the date of the vision itself, which brings him to the year 1847.

The last of these various readings is, I find, adopted by Mr. Piere. He (supposing, erroneously as I conceive, the Romans to be this little horn of the third beast,) dates from the year B. C. 200, when, he says, the Roman standard first appeared in Asia. This would bring us exactly to the year 2000.

SECTION XX.

*The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.**

THE famous prophecy of the seventy weeks, in whatever difficulties it may be involved, must not be altogether passed over in our review; since it is probable, as Sir Isaac Newton has observed, "it is not to be restrained to our Lord's *first coming* only."

The prophet, after his earnest supplications for his people, is informed by an angel, chap. ix. 24:—

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquities, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

* B. C. 550.

Sir Isaac Newton's exposition, which upon the whole I prefer, is this :—

“ Here, by putting a week for seven years, are reckoned four hundred and ninety years from the time that the dispersed Jews should be reincorporated into a people and a holy city, until the death and resurrection of Christ ; whereby *transgression should be finished, and sins ended, iniquity be expiated, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and this vision be accomplished, and the prophet consummated*, that prophet whom the Jews expected ; and whereby the *Most Holy* should be *anointed* ; HE who is, therefore, in the next words, called the *Anointed*, that is, the Messiah, or Christ.” “ For by joining the accomplishment of the vision with the expiation of sins, the four hundred and ninety years are ended with the death of Christ. Now, the dispersed Jews became a people and city when they first returned into a polity, or body politic, and this was the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, when Ezra returned with a body of Jews from captivity, and revived the Jewish worship ; and by the king's commission created magistrates in all the land, to judge and govern the people according to the laws of God and the King.—Ezra, vii. 25.” This era is commonly dated B. C. 457, from whence to the year of the crucifixion, A. D. 33, is four hundred and ninety years.

25. “ Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment, or oracle, to restore and build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks.”

The following is Sir Isaac Newton's exposition :—

“ The former part of the prophecy related to the first coming of Christ, being dated to his coming as a Prophet : this, being dated to his coming to be Prince or King,

seems to relate to his *second coming*. There, the prophet was consummate, and the Most Holy anointed; here, He that was anointed comes to be Prince, and to reign. For Daniel's prophecies reach to the end of the world; and there is scarce a prophecy in the Old Testament concerning *Christ* which doth not, in something or other, relate to his second coming. If divers of the ancients, as *Irenæus*, *Julius Africanus*, *Hippolitus* the martyr, and *Apollinaris*, bishops of Laodicea, applied the half week to the times of *Antichrist*; why may not we, by the same liberty of interpretation, apply the seven weeks to the time when *Antichrist* shall be destroyed by the brightness of *Christ's* coming?"

"The Israelites, in the days of the ancient prophets, when the ten tribes were led into captivity, expected a double return; and that at the first the *Jews* should build a new temple, inferior to *Solomon's*, until the time of that age should be fulfilled; and afterwards they should return from all places of their captivity, and build *Jerusalem* and the temple gloriously, Tobit, xiv. 4, 5, 6: and to express the glory and excellence of this city, it is figuratively said to be built of precious stones, Tobit, xiii. 16, 17, 18; Isaiah, liv. 11, 12; Rev. xi.; and called the *new Jerusalem*, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, the *holy city*, the *city into which the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour*. Now, while such a return from captivity was the expectation of Israel, even before the times of *Daniel*, I know not why *Daniel* should omit it in his prophecy. This part of the prophecy being, therefore, not yet fulfilled, I shall not attempt a particular interpretation of it, but content myself with observing, that as the *seventy* and *sixty-two weeks* were *Jewish weeks*, ending with sabbatical years, so the *seven weeks* are the compass

of a *jubilee*, and begin and end with actions proper for a *jubilee*, and of the highest nature for which a *jubilee* can be kept; and that since *the commandment to return and to build Jerusalem* precedes the *Messiah, the Prince*, forty-nine years, it may, perhaps, come forth, not from the *Jews* themselves, but from some other kingdom friendly to them, and precede their return from captivity, and give occasion to it; and, lastly, that this building of *Jerusalem* and the waste places of *Judah* is predicted in *Micah*, vii. 11; *Amos*, ix. 11, 14; *Ezek.* xxxvi. 33, 35, 36, 38; *Isaiah*, liv. 3, 11, 12; lv. 12; lxi. 4; lxv. 18, 21, 22; and *Tobit*, xiv. 5; and that the return from captivity and coming of the *Messiah* and his kingdom are described in *Daniel*, vii.; *Rev.* xix.; *Acts*, i.; *Matt.* xxiv.; *Joel*, iii.; *Ezek.* xxxvi.; xxxvii.; *Isaiah*, lx.; lxii.; lxiii.; lxv.; and lxvi.; and many other places of Scripture. The manner I know not. Let time be the interpreter."

I continue Newton's translation and exposition.

" Yet threescore and two weeks shall it return, and the street shall be built and the wall, but in troublesome times: and after the threescore and two weeks the MESSIAH shall be cut off, and it shall not be his; but the people of a Prince to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

" Having foretold both comings of *Christ*, and dated the last from their returning and building *Jerusalem*, to prevent the applying that to the building *Jerusalem* by *Nehemiah*, he distinguishes this from that, by saying, that from this period to the *Anointed* shall be, not seven weeks, but threescore and two weeks, and this not in prosperous, but in troublesome times; and at the end of these weeks, the *Messiah* shall not be the Prince of the *Jews*, but be cut off; and *Jerusalem* not be his, but the

city and sanctuary be destroyed." Sir Isaac Newton dates these sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, from the coming of Nehemiah to Jerusalem to the birth of Christ.¹

"And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading² of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,"—or, "on the wing or pinnacle *of the temple* shall be the desolating abominations, even until the consummation and that determined be poured upon the desolate."

The confirming of the covenant with many is generally referred to the ministry of Christ and his apostles, by which means a remnant of Jews, according to the election of grace, were called out of a nation doomed to speedy destruction, "because they knew not the time of their visitation." In the midst of this period,—the day of grace, as it were, to the Jewish church,—which seems to have included our Lord's personal ministry, and the efficient period of the ministry of the apostles "to them of the circumcision:" in the midst of this period, the death of the Redeemer fulfilled and so caused to cease the daily oblation of the Jewish temple, the shadow of good things to come. Many interpreters, however, with Mr. Lowth, suppose the week to terminate with the death of Christ, and translate, "in the last part of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." These interpreters include the

¹ See Sir Isaac Newton, p. 135.

² Or, "wing." Compare Isaiah, viii. 8.

ministry of John the Baptist in the week of the covenant, and suppose his ministry to have lasted three years and a half.

The destruction by the Roman armies is next foretold, and is couched in language very similar to a former prophecy of Isaiah : —

A remnant shall be restored by him,
 A consummation is determined,
He overfloweth in righteous vengeance.
 For a consummation, even that determined,
 The Lord Jehovah Sabaoth will make
 In the midst of the whole earth.

And it is remarkable that, as has been already observed, the earlier fathers interpreted, “ the making of the covenant for one week,” and “ the causing the oblation and sacrifice to cease,” of future transactions in the last triumph of Antichrist. And this will, perhaps, receive some countenance from Isaiah, xxxiii. 7, 8, 9. “ He hath broken the covenant — he hath despised the cities.”

The reader will not fail to discover some analogy between this and the last prophecy, in respect of the mysterious dates annexed to them. In the prophecy before us, an event, which is clearly designated as being the finishing of our redemption in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is foretold to come to pass after seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years. The epocha from whence these four hundred and ninety years were to be dated, though it seems to be marked by “ the going forth of a decree to restore Jerusalem,” could not be clearly ascertained so as to remove all uncertainty, till the wonderful era had transpired.

The pious Israelites that waited for the appearing of the Messiah would naturally first have fixed upon the date

of the vision, B. C. 550. But the year 60 before Christ, which is four hundred and ninety years from that date, would show no appearance of the accomplishment of their hopes.

Their thoughts would next, with confidence, fix on the celebrated edict of Cyrus for the return of the captives from Babylon, and the rebuilding of their temple. This edict went forth in the year B. C. 536. This would have fixed their expectation on the year B. C. 46. That anxious hope not realized, they would next look to the year B. C. 30, which completed seventy weeks from a second edict to rebuild Jerusalem, issued in the year 520. But still, as many as "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" were again doomed to be disappointed. The Spirit of prophecy, as the event has shown, meant to date the seventy weeks from a subsequent epocha, from the royal decree, sixty years later still, which Ezra carried into execution B. C. 457, or 8.

And it is interesting to remember, that all these dates must have exercised the faith and expectations of Anna and Simeon, so celebrated in the Gospel story: and we seem to discern a peculiar kindness in the revelation made to the latter, "That he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ."

It is most probable he had expected the coming of the Messiah in connexion with the year 60, and again in 46 B. C.; and having seen that pass in vain, and the year 30 too, must now have begun to despair, indeed, that he should ever live to see "the consolation of Israel."

So they, perhaps, who are now endeavouring from the same word of prophecy, to make out the dates respecting the second advent, which the church is generally convinced must be near approaching, may several times be

disappointed in their calculations, though built on the best grounded conjectures. But though he seem to tarry, we are bid to wait for him; and there is a blessing for him whom, when he cometh, his Lord shall find waiting. The description of his faithful people is, that they "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief," which is most encouraging to the students of prophecy.

SECTION XXI.

The Last Prophecy of Daniel.

IT now remains to consider the last prophecy contained in the book of Daniel. This is not, as the former prophecies are, revealed in vision; but is a plain narration made to Daniel by an angelic being, commissioned by the WORD OF GOD to show to him "what is written in the Scriptures of truth:"—

14. "Now I am come," says the angel, "to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."

It falls not within my design to follow the angel while he traces, in the subsequent history of Persia and Grecia, those events which would most concern the welfare of the remnant of Israel, situated, as they were, in the midst between the two most powerful kingdoms established by the successors of Alexander, Syria on the north, and Egypt on the south. The design of the present work will only permit us to take up the narrative where it introduces the interference of the fourth, or Roman empire: because, as we have before learned, in

the history of this empire we are to trace the signs of the coming of the Son of Man, and of the erection of his glorious monarchy.

The first notice of the Roman power we find in the thirtieth verse of the eleventh chapter, and it will immediately remind us of the last parable of Balaam, respecting the foe to come from Chittim.

The prophecy had been pointing out the ravages committed by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Grecian king of Syria, the most injurious enemy which the Jews had found among the successors of Alexander, who had taken their city and defiled their temple. The prophecy describes him as going on a second expedition against the Ptolemies, the Grecian kings of Egypt, where he is checked in his career by a mandate from Rome : —

29. “ At the time appointed, he shall come towards the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter : ”

Two recent expeditions against that country, in which Antiochus had succeeded : —

“ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; ¹ therefore shall he be grieved and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.”

“ The ships of Chittim,” says Bishop Newton, “ are the ships that brought the Roman ambassadors who came from Italy, touched at Greece, and arrived in Egypt, being sent by the senate, at the supplication of the Ptolemies, to command a peace between the contending kings.” “ St. Jerome says on the occasion, when the two

¹ Καὶ εἰσέλθουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ “ Et venient super eum Trieres
ἐκ πορευόμενοι Κίτιοι. — SEPTUAGINT. et Romani.” — VULGATE.

brothers, Ptolemies, the sons of Cleopatra, were besieged by their uncle in Alexandria, the Roman ambassadors came; one of whom, Marcus Popilius Lænas, when he found him standing on the shore, and had delivered to him the decree of the senate, by which he was commanded to depart from the friends of the Roman people, and to be content with his own empire; and he would have deferred the matter to consult his friends: Popilius is said to have made a circle in the sand with the stick that he held in his hand, and to have circumscribed the king, and to have said, The senate and people of Rome order, that in that place you answer what is your intention. With these words being frightened, he said, If this pleases the senate and people of Rome, we must depart; and so presently drew off his army. The reason of the Romans acting in this imperious manner, and of Antiochus so readily obeying, was, as Polybius suggests, the total conquests that Æmilius, the Roman consul, had just made of the kingdom of Macedonia. It was, without doubt, a great mortification to Antiochus to be so humbled, and so disappointed of his expected prey: *therefore he grieved and returned.* He led back his forces into Syria, as Polybius says, grieved and groaning, but thinking it expedient to yield to the times for the present, *and had indignation against the holy covenant;* for he vented all his anger upon the Jews; he detached Apollonius with an army of twenty-two thousand men,* who, coming to Jerusalem, slew great multitudes, plundered the city, set fire to it in several places, and pulled down the houses and walls round about it. Then they builded, on an eminence in the city of David, a strong fortress,

* B. C. 169.

which might command the temple; and issuing from thence, they fell on those that came to worship, and shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it; so that the temple was deserted, and the whole service omitted; the city was forsaken of its natives, and became an habitation of strangers. *So he did*; and after his return to Antioch, he published a decree, which obliged all persons, upon pain of death, to conform to the religion of the Greeks; and so the Jewish law was abrogated, the heathen worship was set up in its stead, and the temple itself was consecrated to Jupiter Olympius. In the transacting and ordering of these matters, he *had intelligence* with them that forsook the *holy covenant*—Menelaus and the other apostate Jews of his party, who were the king's chief instigators against their religion and their country."

"And arms shall stand on his part,"—or, "and arms," (not weapons, but a man's *arms*,)—"and arms after him,"—or, "beyond him, shall stand up,"—or, "be raised."¹

That is, to carry on the work of profaning the temple of God, which Antiochus had so daringly begun: "and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice; and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." "All things duly considered," says Bishop Newton, "no interpretation of this passage appears so rational and convincing as that proposed by Sir Isaac Newton:—'In the same year that Antiochus, by command of the Romans, retired out of

¹ "Mighty powers shall stand up from these," namely from the descendants of Chittim, mentioned

in the preceding verse. One MS. reads, *וְרַעְסֵי*, 'arms of the west.'—WINTLE.

Egypt, and set up the worship of the Greeks in Judea, the Romans conquered the kingdom of Macedon, the fundamental kingdom of the empire of the Greeks, and reduced it into a Roman province, and thereby began to put an end to the reign of Daniel's third beast. This is thus expressed by Daniel: *And after him, arms*, that is, the Romans, *shall stand up*. 'Arms' are every where in the prophecy of Daniel put for the military power of a kingdom, and they 'stand up' when they conquer and grow powerful. Hitherto Daniel described the actions of the kings of the *north* and *south*; but upon the conquest of Macedon by the Romans, he left off describing the actions of the Greeks, and began to describe those of the Romans in Greece. They conquered Macedon, Illyricum, and Epirus, in the year 168. Thirty-five years after, by the last will and testament of Attalus, the last king of Pergamus, they inherited that rich and flourishing kingdom, that is, all Asia westward of Mount Taurus. Sixty-nine years after, they conquered the kingdom of Syria, and reduced it into a province; and thirty-four years after they did the like to Egypt. By all these steps, the Roman arms stood up over the Greeks; and after ninety-five years more, by making war upon the Jews, *they polluted the sanctuary of strength, and took away the daily sacrifice, and then placed the abomination of desolation*; for this abomination was placed after the days of Christ, Matt. xxiv. 15, in the sixteenth year of the emperor Adrian, A. D. 132.* They placed this abomination by building a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus where the temple of God had stood. Thereupon, the Jews,

* Or rather, perhaps, A. D. 70;—the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus.

under the conduct of Barchochab, rose up in arms against the Romans; and in the war had 50 cities abolished, 985 of their best towns destroyed, and 580,000 men slain by the sword: and in the end of the war were banished Judea upon pain of death, and henceforward the land remained desolate of its old inhabitants.” — “In support of this interpretation,” continues the bishop, “it may be added, that the Jews themselves, as Jerome informs us, ‘understood this passage not of Antiochus, but of the Romans; of whom it was said above, *that ships of Chittim shall come, and he shall be grieved.* After some time, says the prophet, out of the Romans themselves who came to assist Ptolemy, and menaced Antiochus, there shall arise the Emperor Vespasian—there shall arise his arms or seed, his son Titus, with an army; and they shall pollute the sanctuary, and take away the daily sacrifice, and deliver the temple to eternal desolation.’”

Thus, I conceive, this difficult passage has been very satisfactorily cleared up; and we see where the transition is made, from the contests of the neighbouring kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, to the exploits of that great and terrible dominion, which is only to perish entirely at the day of Christ’s appearing and kingdom. Our Saviour himself, we are to recollect, as pointed out by Sir Isaac Newton, has assigned “the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” to a period after his death. The desolation by the Romans must, therefore, be intended; and we may with confidence take up here the thread of the prophetic narrative:—

32. “And such as do wickedly against the covenant,” or, “who condemn,” or, “reject* the covenant, shall he corrupt,”

* רשע.

or, “*heathenize*” * with flatteries; but the people that do know their God, shall be strong, and do exploits: and they that understand,” or, “the teachers, among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall [more correctly, be impelled to their fall] † by sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days.”

“These things,” Bishop Newton observes, “are applicable to the *Christian Jews*; for *now* the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the temple was given to desolation, and the Christian church had succeeded to the place of the Jewish—the new covenant in the place of the old: *and such as do wickedly against*, ‘condemn,’ or ‘reject,’ *the covenant, shall he*, that is, the power before described, who took away the daily sacrifice,” &c.—shall

“Corrupt with flatteries.”

What is this but to say, that Rome shall be the seducer of the faithless Christians, as it had been the destroyer of the formal Jews? “Corrupt by flatteries,” or, “profane by seductive speeches,” or, “cause them to heathenize,” as the term may signify, we may apply to the arts used by the heathen magistrates, to cause the primitive professors of Christ’s holy religion to apostatize; or more especially to that “stronger delusion,” which from the Romish church as its centre, and upheld by the powers of the state in the Roman world, sealed the eternal ruin of those that “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved:” and which apostate power actually restored, with but small variations, the corrupt institutions of the ancient Pagan religion. In either case, those alone who knew not their God, and

* חנף. † כשל.

who were not steadfast to his covenant, could be brought to apostatize by their flattering speeches: "Those who knew their God were strong, and did exploits," or, "prevailed in their deed,"—they "acted, and succeeded." We have Christ's own words for it, "The very elect" are not,—cannot possibly be deceived. Those who "wandered after the beast," in the language of a future prophecy, though they are pronounced to be "all the world," did not include those "whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world."

"And they that understand among the people," or as we should rather render, "The teachers of the people,* shall instruct many: yet they shall fall," or, "be impelled to their fall, by sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days." One of the leading institutions of the Christian church, was the appointment of a distinct order of men to be "ministers of the word;" what they received in their divine commission, "the same they were to commit to faithful men able also to teach others," and thus to perpetuate their order. It was by these ministers that the Gospel was propagated, "they instructed many:" and on the bishops and clergy of the Christian church the weight of persecution for the most part fell. The mention of flame, as the instrument of persecution, appears to me to extend the view of the prophecy to those who fell in the papal persecutions. The sword of the executioner generally terminated the witness of the primitive Christian; but the burning fire was the almost universal instrument of the cruelty of apostate Christian Rome, by which she prevailed over the martyrs of Jesus.

34. "And when they shall fall,—and when they shall be

* משכילי עם.

impelled to their fall," or, " thrust at that they might fall—they shall be holpen with a little help; but many shall cleave to them with flatteries."

This, like the last verse, is to be applied to the general history of the church; and that history well explains the predictions. This persecution of the teachers and confessors of the Gospel was not to be perpetual and uninterrupted. They were to have their *breathing times*, or rather their *turns of favour*, from the world that persecuted them: and the language of the prediction seems to imply, that the very violence of their adversaries would operate to produce this change in their favour in the public mind:—" and when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help, but many shall cleave to them with flatteries."

Such has been the issue of the persecutions of the church; they generally promoted her interests in the world, so that it became proverbial, " the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." It was especially the case in the last heathen persecution of Dioclesian. For a short season, the injuries of the church seemed to be recompensed with the prostration of all the power and wealth of the empire at her feet. So in Germany and the United Provinces, at the time of the Reformation, after the persecutor's sword had laid many low, and the church had been *weakened* " by flame, and captivity, and by spoil, many days," a considerable degree of public favour and support was vouchsafed to the professors of the Gospel. The same scene was unfolded in the persecution and dispersion, and in the subsequent re-establishment, of the British churches.

The help afforded, however, is pronounced to be but little. But little in reality; in appearance it is much:

"*many* shall cleave to them with flatteries." Alas! is not this a true description of that favour which the Gospel has received in those nations and cities where it has been adopted and acknowledged as the public religion? The whole population, perhaps, rulers and people, have embraced it, and very zealously maintained its peculiar doctrines; insomuch, that an evangelical tone has been given to the public sentiment and language; but, for the most part, this has proved hollow and deceitful. The true disciples of Christ found themselves in a new situation indeed, caressed and highly flattered by that world that had formerly persecuted them; but, when they looked to the real interests of faith and godliness, they found the help afforded by a nominally subject world was but small. The Gospel, instead of being persecuted, was complimented; but this was nearly all. Too true a character of the public profession of revealed religion, in all the various Protestant and reformed communities and nations which have renounced popery! Though the religion of the Gospel be the public and national profession, you must make a marked distinction between the few who are the true successors to the primitive martyrs, and the many that cleave to them with flatteries; who "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof:" and while they publicly profess to be the advocates for the truth, are known to be hostile to it.

35. "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed."¹

This verse, I conceive, has not been generally under-

¹ "Quia adhuc, aliud tempus erit."—VULG.

stood. "Them of understanding," or rather, "those who make to understand;" the same word that I have rendered "teachers" above.—Of these teachers and authorized instructors of the Christian faith, "some shall fall"—"shall stumble" in doctrine, and fall into error. "To try them," or as it is in the English margin, "to try by them, and to purge, and to make white."¹

We shall recollect, that in the view just taken of the professed church, persecution has ceased, many are cleaving to the followers of Christ; not sincerely, but with flatteries. The professed church is become, therefore, a very unsound and corrupted body. What is to show this, and separate the precious from the vile? False teachers shall be permitted to arise, to put it to the proof whether the professing world do really know and love that truth which they profess.—"There must be heresies, that those that are approved amongst you may be made manifest." This then is the ordeal and the touchstone of the church, at whatever time, or in whatever place, persecution has ceased. Those, however, that can be drawn away from the truth, do not know it, nor love it. It is only those whom false doctrine cannot deceive, that are the genuine people of God. But so subtle would be the deception, our Lord has told us, that it "would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect."

We collect, therefore, that all who can at any time be drawn away from the truth, by false doctrine of any kind,

¹ Mr. Faber, I believe, has no authority for translating נִשָּׁל, to perish. His reference to the use of the Niphal, verse 33, is no proof. It cannot there signify to perish; see verse 34. The former

is rightly rendered by Simon, "ad labendum impellentur;" and the latter—"to impelli eorum ad labendum." The Septuagint renders, "αθηνουσι," and "ἐν τῷ αθηνεσαι."

are but as the impurities, and the filth of which the church must be purged and cleansed. This is particularly applicable to the present state of many churches, in which persecution of the truth has ceased ; but by means of false teachers, they have by degrees been prevailed upon to give up that faith, for which their fathers so earnestly contended ; and though, as it were by destiny, the public and avowed profession remains the same, to be a testimony against their unfaithfulness ; there are found but very few, and they hated and despised, who hold the doctrines of their own churches in purity and sincerity. Thus it is to be even to the end ; because it is yet for a time appointed.—Compare the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth chapters of Isaiah.

36. “ And the king shall do according to his will.”

No small diversity of opinion is found among expositors on this and the following verses. All, however, are pretty well agreed, that by “ the king,” in this place, “ must be understood the *Roman state*, under what kind of government soever.”* That government, in its last form, was symbolized in the former visions by the “ feet and toes” of an image, “ part of iron, and part of clay ;” and again by ten horns, after which came up another little horn. These symbols have already been deciphered of the present sovereignties of Europe, together with the papacy : and it is very clear, that we are to look for no other remarkable opponent of God and his church distinct from these powers. For it is on the feet of the image, which are “ part of iron, and part of clay,” and that will not cleave together, that the stone strikes. “ In the days

* Mede.

of those kings, the God of heaven sets up a kingdom :” and whatever mystery veils the particular judgment of the “little horn,” as distinguished from that of “the fourth beast,” in general, the words which the horn spake, it should seem, *are considered* in the sitting of that judgment, which gives the body of the beast to the burning fire. So that, I think, we may safely say, that the sovereignties of Roman Catholic Europe, by whatever power or influence combined to act together, or however they divide the actual authority of the Roman state between them, are “THE KING” here spoken of.—“He shall do according to his will.” This has been understood to denote the lawless character of the king; hence the “wilful king” of Mr. Faber. But as the same expressions are found in a former verse, respecting the successful progress of the Macedonian Alexander, no more may be meant than the unchecked and uncontrolled prosperity of the empire in its conflicts with other nations, or against the cause and people of God.

—“And he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every God; and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished, for,”—or “when—that which is determined shall be done.”

Mr. Mede, Sir Isaac, Bishop Newton, and many others, interpret this of the abominations of the papacy; and consider the passage as parallel with the description of the little horn of the former vision, “having a mouth speaking great things,” which is explained, “he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change times and laws,” &c. Mr. Faber, and more recent expositors, are of opinion, that we have here exhibited the

new character which the fourth, or Roman empire, assumes towards the last, when, bursting the bands of its superstitious devotion to the papacy, it stands forth in the avowed character of Antichrist.

It is with me a mystery *how far* the superstitions of the Roman Catholic religion do give place, in the fourth empire, to that more avowed opposition to all religion of infidel philosophy. I think it is a fact, that it does do so to a considerable extent; and it is respecting this alteration of character, that Mr. Faber and others, by the help of the very recent history of Europe, have thrown great light upon prophecy. But he and most others acknowledge, that we find popery and infidelity strangely blended together till the very last judgments. I have no doubt, however, that the "magnifying himself above every god," in this place, especially from a comparison of Daniel, vii. 25; and 2 Thess. ii. 4, should be considered as describing, not modern infidelity, but the high presumption, and blasphemous claims, of the Roman Catholic powers, in their perversion of the true doctrines of the Gospel; and in the substitution of the abominations of the papacy, instead of the ordinances of primitive Christianity.

"— Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women; nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all."

Mr. Faber has applied this with considerable show of argument to modern infidelity, as distinguished from the papistical idolatry; and though the application be generally wrong, must, I conceive, have been successful in his interpretation of "the Desire of women," as an epithet of the Redeemer, rather than as an obscure intimation of the

Roman Catholic doctrine of the merit of celibacy, and of the policy of the papacy in enjoining it upon the clergy, according to the more ancient interpreters. How the epithet of “the Desire of women” should apply to our incarnate Jehovah, every reader of Scripture will be ready to explain: and as it is mentioned here among *objects of worship*, I have no doubt Mr. Faber is right in applying it to “the woman’s Seed;” but I still think the passage has in view the Roman Catholic apostacy, without considering it as yet merged in modern infidelity. The Roman Catholic has shown a total disregard to God, that God which his fathers, the primitive Christians, worshipped, and *has bestowed consideration*¹ neither on God nor on his Christ. “The true God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent,” were then disregarded, when he “thought” and successfully devised “to change times and laws.” He did not, indeed, bestow that consideration which he withdrew from the true God and his only Son upon another God; but he assumed the attributes of God to himself, and perverted all to his own temporal interest, and yet, as we shall see in the sequel, has not “kept himself from idols,” in a secondary sense. Such strikes me as being the true explanation of this verse.

38. “But in his estate he shall honour the God of forces, and a God whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones.”

“But in his estate,”—when he has established himself, he shall honour “for God,” or “with God,” or “before God,” Mahuzzim, Maozim, or Mozim.² I retain the

¹ לא יבין על

θεου μαωζιμ.—SEPT. “Deum au-

² לאלה מעוים עלבנו יכבר, καὶ tem Maozim.”

original word. This word has but two significations in Scripture: it signifies a fortress or strong place, or an object of religious trust—the supplier and resource of strength. As Psalm xxvii. 1, “God is the STRENGTH of my life;” Prov. x. 29, “The way of the Lord is STRENGTH to the upright;” and Isaiah, xxx. 3, “Therefore shall the STRENGTH of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.” There can be no doubt that we are to understand in this place Mahuzzim as the objects of religious trust, the supposed suppliers of strength and protection: and history shows the application clear “to the canonized saints which popery has enshrined with the true God,” and to bestow honour on whom he has disregarded God and his Son, as is notorious.¹

“And a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour.”

I am strongly inclined to be of their opinion who conceive that this is fulfilled in the adoration which the Papists pay to the host, or consecrated wafer. It is a god, or object of worship, unknown, even by report, to their Christian forefathers: and the term applied to this object of worship in the following verse, “a strange god,”² always denotes, in the Hebrew language, some object of idolatrous worship; and such is certainly the “broaden god” of the Romanists. How this object of the idolatrous superstition of Rome, with the canonized saints, have been honoured with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and desirable things, forms a most glaring feature in the history, through many ages, and in the present display of the Roman Catholic worship.

¹ MEDE.

² אלה נכר.

But when Mr. Faber applies all this to the allegorical deities, whose adoration was decreed by the infidel convention of France, in a moment of revolutionary frenzy, *Liberty, Equality, the Country, the Constitution, the Virtues*—it cannot but occur, that amidst all their fantastic fooleries about these deities, they took special care to bestow very little gold, or silver, or precious stones, to their honour. No; this prophecy clearly belongs to the more sincere superstition of the Roman Catholic devotee—a superstition that during a length of ages covered so many shrines and altars with these precious materials, enriched so many religious foundations, and raised so many magnificent palaces all over Europe.

39. “ Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange God, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.”

It is in this verse, if I mistake not, the *decline* of the papacy and of the reign of superstition is marked: but the language of the prophecy will demand our attentive consideration. The phrase which we render “ most strong holds” contains in the original two distinct terms; the latter is the MAHUZZIM of the last verse: in a state of construction with which is another term that signifies a fortress or strong hold, a fenced city or castle; so that it may be literally rendered “ the fortresses,” “ strong holds,” or “ castles of Mahuzzim.”¹ And again, for “ thus he shall do in,” we may render, “ And he shall act against;” or more literally, “ And he shall go to work upon,” in a hostile sense, so as to appropriate them to

¹ מבצרי מועים, “ Fortresses of Mahuzzim.”—WINTLE.

himself.¹ "And he shall act against the fortresses of Mahuzzim, together with the strange god which he acknowledged, *and to which* he had multiplied honour, and had caused them to rule over many, and he shall divide the land for gain," or "portion it out at a price." That is to say, He, the symbolical king, shall begin at a certain period to act against the former objects of his devotion, his *canonized saints* and the *idolized host*, which he had formerly honoured with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and had so magnificently lodged in the high places of the earth; and shall portion out their lands to others.

This, I conceive, is fulfilled in that confiscation and secularizing of ecclesiastical property which has, in our day, become so much the practice among the Roman Catholic princes and states, to the great debasement of the papal superstition, and which, to anticipate the language of a future prophecy, will still go on till the "ten horns upon the beast shall make the whore desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." I think, with Mr. Faber, there is something in the language of prophecy, "he shall divide the land for a price," to be particularly observed. It distinctly marks the dividing the land into certain portions, and the selling of these portions at a certain price,—not the giving them away. We may say, it points out, not such a

¹ Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 32. ריעש העם אל שלל, "and the people fled upon the spoil." As Simon explains, "*Incubuit populus direptioni*," ut Arab. notat *irruere*. Dimock gives much the same sense to the passage, by supplying the word כרצנו after ריעש, as in verse

36. "And he shall do according to his will to the fortresses of Mahuzzim, and with or against the strange god." Dimock translates the last clause, "He shall magnify his glory, and shall rule over them with his mighty ones."

bestowal of the lands, dedicated to superstitious usages, as our eighth Henry made, when he lavished the undivided abbey lands upon his courtiers: but, with wonderful precision, the language of the prophecy points out the method used in disposing of the lands of the church, and other forfeited property, in the French revolution,—that revolution, which, there are strong grounds to believe, has marked the commencement of a great prophetic era, and has begun to develop the characters and actors of the last times. The confiscated property in France, of which the lands of the church made a very great portion, was not simply conveyed to other possessors, or generously bestowed upon friends and partizans; but those lands were all publicly sold at a price, and artfully divided, and subdivided, for the convenience of small purchasers.

This deep-laid stroke of policy, as Mr. Faber remarks, has made a complete change of landed property in France, and has made it the direct interest of every landholder throughout the kingdom to uphold revolutionary principles; and though, since Mr. Faber wrote, the leaders of the revolution have been put down by foreign violence, the house of Bourbon restored, and the papal superstition re-established, yet it is plain, from the transactions of the day, that the march of revolutionary principles in Europe is not at an end, nor can her old princes restore the former times in France; but, if they reign at all, must reign as revolutionary princes. This sale of lands, it is obvious, can never be resumed; and is at this hour, as far as relates to the immense possessions of the papal church, in full force as an example to Spain and Portugal, and probably not destined there to stop.

And what should strike us as still more important is,

the very great probability that this particular device of the French rulers, of the sale and division of lands, has, in another point of view, given a new character to society, both political and domestic, in France ; and in Europe, as far as Europe shall follow the example. An eminent writer of the present day has in a remarkable manner pointed out, in the present situation of the French nation, in consequence of this selling of the land for a price, and of the laws of the succession of property established in the Revolution, the very lineaments of such a monster as we expect to stand up against Christ and his saints, in the last conflict of the nations : and we must be aware, that France is such a leading and principal kingdom among the divided sovereignties of the Roman empire, that she is likely to stamp her character on all the rest, and sooner or later draw them into the vortex of her example.

I shall need no apology for the following quotation from Mr. Malthus : “ On the effects of a great subdivision of property, a fearful experiment is now making in France ; ” — “ should this continue unimpeded, there is every reason to believe that the country, at the end of a century, will be quite as remarkable for its extraordinary poverty and distress, as for its unusual equality of property. The owners of minute divisions of landed property will be, as they always are, peculiarly without resource, and must perish in great numbers in every scarcity. Scarcely any man can be rich, but those who receive salaries from government. In this state of things, with little or none of the natural influence of property to check at once the power of the crown, and the violence of the people, it is not possible to conceive that such a mixed government, as France has now established, can be main-

tained. Nor can I think that a state of things, in which there would be so much poverty, could be favourable to the existence and duration of a republic: and when, in addition to this, we consider how extremely difficult it is, under any circumstances, to establish a well conducted republic, and how dreadful the chances are against its continuance, as the experience of all history shows; it is not too much to say, that no well grounded hope could be entertained of the permanent prevalence of such a form of government. But the state of property above described, would be the very soil for a military despotism.

“ If the government did not adopt the eastern mode of considering itself the territorial proprietor, it might at least take a hint from the economists, and declare itself co-proprietor with the landlords; and from this source (which might still be a fertile one, though the landlords, on account of their numbers, might be poor) together with a few other taxes, the army might easily be made the richest part of the society; and it would possess an overwhelming influence, which, in such a state of things, nothing could oppose. The despot might now and then be changed, as under the Roman emperors, by the pretorian guards; but the despotism would certainly rest upon very solid foundations.”*

All this may serve to confirm our suspicions, that the era of the French Revolution was, indeed, the era of the rise of that great antichristian polity that shall arm the Roman world against Christ and his people in the last days, and produce that mighty combination of chiefs and armies that are to fall in the great day, hereafter to be described. Expositors have evidently been too rash in

* MALTHUS's *Political Economy*, p. 433.

applying the language of prophecy to the minute detail of events in the late Revolution; but, it should seem, the teeth of the vanquished monster have been sown, and will spring up into armed men! And thus may we expect to see that nation of the last times, that are emphatically "the people that delight in war," who are to plunge the world into a scene of trouble, such as was not since there was a nation upon earth; and whose career can alone be stopped by the appearing of the great Avenger of Israel.

We now come to the description of the last expedition of this great foe of the people of God; and, distant as is the seat of his empire, we shall find that, agreeably to former prophecies, he meets his fate upon the mountains of Israel, where THE AVENGER of his people is manifested in his glory.

40. "And at the time of the end, the king of the south shall push at *HIM*," or, "butt with him."

That the subject of this prediction is the same character whose exploits are described in the last verses, according to the plain grammatical structure of the language, we have no reason to doubt.* It is then the Roman empire, under its divided sovereignties, by whatever influence or power combined together, that is the object of this attack. Who the king of the south is, that ventures to contend with the fourth empire, putting forth at that time, it should seem, in an unusual manner, what "it has in it of the strength of iron," perhaps we are not warranted to say positively. But, we may suggest, some power commanding to the south of the land of Israel, having possession most probably of the land of Egypt

* FRASER and FABER.

—the “*messenger nation*,” I suspect, whose seat, or principal scene of operations, is beyond the rivers of Cush*—the party described in Ezekiel as questioning or braving the triumphant adversary to the last. “Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof.”†

The issue of this contest, or threatened contest, is not mentioned. The brunt of the war appears to be in another quarter; perhaps it was a preconcerted and united attack.

“And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships.”

Unless the situation of nations shall be strangely altered, we can have no doubt who the king of the north must be; certainly the great Russian empire. “At the time of the end,” then, this empire, moved by some political causes, will make a furious and desperate attack upon the sovereignties of the Roman empire. The issue is silently, but very clearly, predicted. The king of the north fails, and exhausts his powers in the unsuccessful attack. The consequence is, the great apostate marches forth in an uninterrupted career of victory, unarrested by any arm of man.

“And *HE* shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over.”

That is, shall invade, and completely subdue them. What countries are not specified; those of the northern enemy we may suppose, and all his dependencies, or

* Isaiah, xviii., xlii. 10; Zeph. iii. 10.

† Ezek. xxxviii. 13.

whatever may be the object of the victor's ambition. We gather from Ezekiel, that before the apostate enters Palestine, he has attached to his party, either by conquest or by stratagem, all the countries of the north, and of the Turkish and Persian empires.* For the combination is specified, as "Gog 'from' the land of Magog, the prince of Ros, Meshech, and Tubal,"—"Persia, Ethiopia, Lybia,"—"Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters." We may say, in fine, that Russia, and all that Russia threatens from her present power and position to conquer, acting under a STILL SUPERIOR HAND, are pushed forward to this great conflict.

41. "And HE shall enter also into the glorious land."

—For what purpose, Ezekiel, and the ancient prophets, have told us. The Israelites, some of them at least, had been restored to "the land, brought back from the sword," and were dwelling in peaceful security.

"And many countries shall be overthrown, but these shall escape out of his hand, Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon."

This circumstance, that Israel's last foe should not extend his ravages to the east of the Jordan, has several times been pointed out before by the oracles of God. Read the description of the mystic storm, Psalm xxix.; and compare Psalm lxviii., and Isaiah, xxxiii. 7, &c. with Joel ii.

42. "And he shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries."

* Chap. xxxviii.

Many countries have been subdued, and his ambition aims at overthrowing many more.

“ And the land of Egypt shall not escape, but he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt : and the Libyans, and the Ethiopians, shall be at his steps.”

He compels them to march in his train. This prophecy also illustrates and explains several former predictions ; especially the sixty-eighth psalm, where the adversary, in his last movement towards his destruction, is blazoned with the emblems of Egypt, and described as coming up from that country, with the African nations in his alliance.

He hath checked the beast of the reed, the assembly of the bulls,

With the calves of the nations, disturbing with their feet the silvery streams ;

He hath dispersed the nations that delight in war.

Chiefs come out of Egypt,

His hand urges Ethiopia against Elohim.

Ye kingdoms of the earth, sing ye Elohim,

Chant ye the Lord.

Him who rideth upon the heaven of heavens ‘ as’ of old ;¹

Lo ! he uttereth a mighty sound with his voice.

44. “ But tidings out of the east, and out of the north, shall trouble him ; therefore, shall he go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.”

Thus he sets out from Egypt, with Ethiopia at his steps, little thinking that it is against the Almighty Re-

¹ Or, “ from the east.”

deemer himself that he now leads his forces. "Tidings," it was said, "out of the east, and out of the north, had troubled him." What these tidings concern, we can only conjecture from a comparison of other passages in the prophetical writings. "Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with the young lions thereof;" — and Sheba and Dedan are in an eastern position—know of something that would defeat the arrogant expectations of Gog. "Art thou come to take a prey?" &c.*

The psalm we just quoted, which describes the foe as first led into Egypt, and then returning with recruited powers, describes also the presence of Jehovah as, at that time, leading his people through the desert; and several other passages had mentioned the manifestation of the God of Israel in the desert to his people, whom he was leading to Zion. The "Just One," who was to execute God's vengeance upon the idolatrous princes of the last days, was to be "raised up from the east."† And it is remarkably said, in the twenty-fifth verse of the same chapter, that he comes from the north, as well as from the east.

"I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come,
From the rising of the sun, he shall call upon my name.

And he shall trample princes as mortar,
And as the potter treadeth the clay."

Whether, from the mention of north and sun-rising, two lines of march are pointed out; or the *north-east* direction, with respect to Egypt, where the adversary, and his congregated armies, then lie; we seem to discover, that the tidings which trouble him have some connexion with the final restoration of the Israelites. We

* Ezek. xxxviii. 13.

† Isaiah, xli.

collect, too, from the twenty-ninth verse of the sixty-eighth psalm, that it is at this era that the messenger-nation, as described in the eighteenth of Isaiah, performs its office, at the signal of Jehovah, to gather his dispersed, and bring them from beyond the rivers of Cush as a present to Jehovah.

We are led then to reflect, that though the great mass of the nations of Europe have fallen under the dominion of the apostate, and he has subdued or obtained a temporary influence over the north, and Turkey, and Persia, and Egypt, with the Cushite nations, and though restored Jerusalem was about to fall the last victim of his rage; yet, that all to the north is not quiet, and further to the east, where the merchants of Tarshish and their warriors frequent the depots of Indian commerce, other scenes are unfolding; and from thence other tidings may be expected.

The leaders of the Roman power, whatever reports they may hear in Egypt, believe not that they shall have to contend with God himself, and, therefore, treating what they hear as some political movement among the northern and eastern nations, it may be to wrest Jerusalem from their grasp, they immediately direct their march thither.

45. "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain."

—The place long ago marked out as the fatal spot where Israel's last foe must meet his fate. In the neighbourhood of Jerusalem he pitches his tent, to conduct the siege, which he all but carries; nay, cuts off one half ere the promised help arrives: but when it does arrive, it is the Mighty One of Israel himself, interposing in his people's behalf.

No doubt all the country between the seas are the scene of this righteous vengeance: "the mountains of Israel," "the plain of Megiddo," and "the valley of Jehoshaphat," are particularly mentioned.

Thus we may explain from other prophecies already delivered, how the adversary that returns with such murderous fury from Egypt, and plants the tabernacle of his palaces in the glorious holy mountain, shall there meet his fate.

"Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

But the angel also himself explains to the prophet Daniel, by what instrument the foe shall meet his destruction.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people."*

This is, beyond all doubt, the great Redeemer, the King Messiah, at his second advent: "the Redeemer of Israel" and "his Holy One," of whose interference on behalf of his people, at the time of the end, we have read so much in the prophecies already considered. †

The time of his appearing is described to be at a season of affliction and trouble, unexampled in the annals of mankind:—

"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time."

An intimation of this we have had in several former prophecies. ‡

* Chap. xii.

† Isaiah, xxx. 27, &c.; xlii. 13, &c.; xlix. 24, &c.; lxvi. 15, 16.

‡ Isaiah, xxiv. 18, &c.; Jeremiah, xxx. 5, &c.; Zeph. i. 14, &c.

But it is amidst these dreadful conflicts of nations that the long promised deliverance arrives.

“ And at that time shall thy people be delivered, every one that is found written in the book.”

This language clearly distinguishes “ the Israel of God” from “ the Israel after the flesh.” In the last troubles, the natural Israel, as we have before learned, suffer extremely,* so that the holy seed that is left may be comparatively small; but all that are registered in the book are the people of the prophet—they obtain deliverance.

And, as several remarkable Scriptures have already declared to us, at this time there is a resurrection from the dead.

—“ And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.”

“ MANY of them that sleep” certainly cannot mean “ *all* that sleep.” This is not, then, the general resurrection; but that resurrection from the dead that precedes the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom upon earth: for his risen and glorified saints are to reign with him. The following passages from former prophecies may, therefore, be quoted as parallel,

And he shall penetrate, in this mountain,
The face of the covering, that is cast over all peoples,
And the veil that is spread over all nations.
He shall penetrate death unto victory.†

* Psalm l.; Isaiah, xlii. 22; lix.; Amos, ix, 10; Jer. xxx. 7; Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

† Isaiah, xxv. 7.

Thy dead shall live, their dead bodies shall rise :
 Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust ;
 For thy covering shall be as the dew of the morning,
 And the earth shall drop the deceased from her womb.*

He that forceth a passage is gone up before them ;
 They have forced a passage, and have passed through the
 gate, and are gone forth by it,
 And their King passeth before them, even Jehovah, at their
 head.†

But we gather from this passage in Daniel, that not only the dead in Christ rise at this time, but some others are thus early called to receive their everlasting doom :—

“ Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,”—or, “ abhorrence.”

And who can these so likely be as the persecutors and destroyers of his people? As we have been before led to remark on an oracle delivered in a former age,‡ at this time, “ not the ghosts of the slain, but the slain themselves, shall face their cruel murderers; and the fears of Herod may, perhaps, be realized in seeing John the Baptist risen from the dead.”

It appears, too, that the Lord will at this time particularly distinguish his servants whom he has employed in the days of their flesh in the work of his ministry.

“ And they that be wise,”—rather, “ who make wise,”—(the TEACHERS, as translated in a foregoing verse of the former chapter,) “ shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and,”—or, “ even they that turn many to righteousness,”—or, “ who justify many, as the stars for ever and ever.”

The parallel terms of this passage are explanatory of

* Isaiah, xxvi. 19. † Micah, ii. 13. ‡ Isaiah, xxvi. 13, &c.

each other: "the splendour of the firmament and the splendour of the stars are the same,"¹ and so "the teachers" and "the justifiers" denote alike the "preachers of the righteousness of faith." It is thus they convert sinners from the error of their ways, and save souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins.²

The verse that follows seems to imply that the meaning of these prophecies would not be understood till a far distant period, near the time of their accomplishment:—

4. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

As some understand these words, at the time of the end, — till when the prophecy is to be a sealed book, — many shall peruse³ the sacred volume, and the knowledge of these things shall be increased or multiplied. Or, as they are more usually understood, many shall go through the world, by land and by sea, at the time of the end, to spread the knowledge of religion. The connexion, I conceive, rather favours the former interpretation, which encourages the expectation that these prophecies, as the time approaches, will become better and better understood.

The prophecy concludes with a specification of certain periods, which, if *we* do not now understand them, are, unquestionably, intended one day to be understood for the information of the church: and we are arrived at an

¹ See Cappellus in Wintle.

the former, "those that are wise."

² It is possible, however, that the last phrase ought to be rendered, "The many justified," and

³ "*Percursitabunt*, scil. librum ejusque verba."—SIMONIS *Lxx.*

age when the time must be comparatively short, and when every serious proposal for the interpretation of these numbers cannot but arrest the attention of those who are "waiting for their Lord," and "love his appearing."

5. "Then I, Daniel, looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon,"—or "over the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half of time, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand,"—or, "but the teachers shall cause to be understood." 11. "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

The question which is here put, we shall remark, is this,—How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? The wonderful things just predicted—the destruction of the last foe—the standing up of Michael—the deliverance of the prophet's people—and the resurrection of many that sleep in the dust of the earth.

The answer of the person clothed in linen is prefaced

by a solemn oath, sworn by the eternal God; a circumstance that ought much to fix our attention. Why is an oath interposed? Does it imply that the heirs of promise, on account of some disappointed expectations, will need to be assured of the immutability of the divine counsel respecting the wonders to take place at the periods about to be specified? Does it imply that in the midst of the scoffs of an unbelieving age, "Where is the promise of his coming?" the love of many will wax cold, and the faith of his waiting people be sorely tried?

Doubtless there is some great reason for this so solemn oath; and we shall remember, that the vengeance to fall on Israel's last foe, when God comes to have mercy on his land and his people, is, in a similar manner, sworn to in Moses' Song of Remembrance.* This is certainly a most awful mark of identity! The matter sworn to is, "That" (it shall be) "for,"—or, "after—a time, and times, and an half;" or, "That" you are to consider it "in relation to a time, and times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people,"—I conceive, when God shall have put an end to the dispersion of his people Israel,—then "all these things shall be finished."

The words of the oath, then, first point out to our consideration a period of a time, times, and an half, which, from a comparison of a former prophecy, is the period during which "the saints," or "the times and laws," are given into the hand of the power symbolized by the little horn of the fourth beast. In inquiring after the time of the end of these wonders, therefore, we seem to be directed to keep our attention fixed upon the lapse of

* Deut. xxxii. 40, &c. Compare Isaiah, xiv. 24.

this remarkable era in the history of Christ's church upon earth. The power symbolized by the little horn of the fourth beast is, we have seen, the papacy; and the period here specified, a time, times, and an half, or three years and an half, reckoning a day for a year, is the period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years. The *vital* question, therefore, my readers will perceive, is this: When did this triumphant career of the papal power commence—when was the epocha which the Spirit designates by saying, “and they were given into his hand,” *they*, the saints against whom he had made war, or, *they*, “the times and laws,” which he devised to change?

We should further remark on the words of the oath, that they do not assert, that with the expiration of this period shall be the end of these wonders, so that the one thousand two hundred and sixty years includes them all; this period of one thousand two hundred and sixty is only marked off, as affording a waymark or direction to the object of our inquiry; and, that past, we are directed to look out for another,—“the *finishing* to scatter the power of the holy people. With the finishing of the dispersion of Israel, that is to say, with their restoration fully accomplished, all these wonders are finished,—the destruction of the foe—the coming of King Messiah—and the resurrection of the dead mentioned above. Such is the matter of the oath. It does not say how long after the expiration of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years will be the interval to the consummation of all things; but only bids us take this mark, and then fix our attention on the holy people, and observe their destinies as time shall unfold them.

But, we observe, the information conveyed by the oath does not satisfy the anxious mind of Daniel. He

ventures to repeat the question, which he thought had not been fully answered.

“ O, my Lord! what shall be the end of these things?”

To this a further answer is vouchsafed. At the same time it is intimated, “ that the words are closed and sealed till the time of the end;” that is, most plainly, the words of the oath specifying the mysterious numbers, are not to be understood till the very last period of the times mentioned: but then they shall be understood; not, however, by the wicked that have transgressed the covenant; but the wise, or rather the teachers of God’s people, shall then be enlightened, to make them known to his waiting people. We infer, then, that the labours of expositors will not always be in vain, in their endeavours to ascertain the epochs of these mysterious periods. But, at the same time, when they do ascertain them, they will not be able to convince a wicked generation; so that the day of the Lord should not come upon them “ as a thief in the night,”—“ as pangs upon a woman with child.”

The further answer returned to Daniel’s most anxious inquiry, “ O, my Lord, when shall be the end of these things?” is as follows: “ And from the time that the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand, two hundred, and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, and five-and-thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

Here, then, we have two other periods of time given for the attentive consideration of those who, like the prophet, love the appearing of our Saviour, and are waiting for it;

a period of 1290 years, and a period of 1335: and the last period, it is clear, terminates with the happy epocha of Messiah's kingdom:—"the end of the days," as in the next verse—when the holy prophet, after his rest in the grave, shall stand in his lot. What the period of 1290 years is to terminate with, is not mentioned. But this we infer, that, forty-five years previous to the blessed era, there is some remarkable epocha which will evidence itself. So far is clear. But what means the prophetic Spirit in designating the epocha, from which these 1290, and 1335 years, are to be counted, as the time when "the daily sacrifice," or continual offering, is taken away, and the "abomination that maketh desolate set up?" This seems a new mystery; though Daniel, for aught appears, was satisfied with the answer.

Now, it appears that the taking away the daily sacrifice, in connexion with placing the abomination of desolation, has been twice mentioned before, chap. ix. 27, and xi. 31: and in both these passages, there is a clear reference to the profanation of the temple of Jerusalem, and its desolation by the Romans. The time is now long gone by, when any question could be made, whether the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem was to mark the epocha, from whence these years are to be dated; though it is probable this would be the first conjecture of interpreters.¹ There would indeed, in this case, have been no

¹ That this was actually the case, see Dr. Hales, vol. ii. 568: and he himself strangely embraces the hypothesis. But the mere statement of the events foretold by the prophetic periods of 1290 and 1335 years, if dated from the

year 70, is sufficient, in my mind, to show the futility of the hypothesis: "1290 years from A. D. 70, the destruction of Jerusalem, brings us to A. D. 1360," "the precise year in which John Wickliffe first began to preach against

apparent connexion between the 1260, assigned as the period of the little horn of the fourth beast, referred to in the words of the oath; and concerning which Daniel had asked for some further explanation, and seemed satisfied with his answer.

The supposition now entertained by almost all expositors is, that the "taking away of the daily offering, and placing the abomination of desolation," denotes in this passage the same thing as "giving the saints," or, "the times and laws, into the hand" of the little horn of the fourth beast;—that the interruption of the temple service, and desolation of the holy city, is to be considered as a type of the triumph of the papal idolatry over the institutions of primitive Christianity. If this be correct, as there is strong reason to assume it is, then we perceive immediately the connexion between the second answer to Daniel and the words of the oath, and the reason why the prophet appears satisfied with this further answer. The words of the oath had said there shall be this period of 1260 years, which was known to the prophet to be the period of the triumph of the little horn—there shall be this period—and all the wonders just revealed would be finished after that, with the finishing of Israel's dispersion. Now, in further explanation, the prophet is told there are two other periods which you are to date from the same time as the 1260 years; namely, 1290 years, and 1335 years: that is to say, thirty years after the close of the little horn's triumphant reign,

<p>the errors of the church of Rome, at Oxford, in England:" 1335 years from the same date brings us to the year 1405, "when John Huss began to preach against the cor-</p>	<p>ruptions of Rome, at Prague, in Bohemia."—Events too unimportant, and the last more than the first.</p>
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will be a remarkable era. What will happen, is not said. But, forty-five years after that, comes the happy era for which you long—the end of all these wonders, which thou, O Daniel, shall rise from the dead to see, and to enjoy, for you have an allotted portion here: and this, indeed, might well satisfy the prophet, and would stay all further inquiry; for he would know that the career of the power symbolized by the “little horn,” was an event of years far remote in futurity; the prophecy then must of necessity be closed, and sealed for many years.

But now, to us, who have fallen on times sufficiently late to see what was symbolized by this little horn of the fourth beast plainly developed; and to see him in the actual possession of his powers, as described in prophecy;—to us, who have, indeed, strong grounds to believe that we are somewhere about the termination of this period—are near approaching it, or have perhaps actually passed it, amid the important changes of the tumultuous age in which we have lived;—to us, thus circumstanced, these mysterious numbers must and ought to awaken every inquiry, if we belong to the waiting family of Christ; for the children of the light are not to be in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief in the night. Surely then in the vigils of the servants of Christ, which they are directed to observe in their watch, these numbers must often exercise their meditations; and will often employ their tongues, while they “talk one to another.”

The *vital* question is, as I have observed before, When, in the history of the corruptions of the church, and in the history of the rise of the papal power, did that event take place, which the Spirit has designated by the giving of the saints, “or the giving of the times and laws,” into the hand of this power? Could we fix with certainty on this,

of all epochas most important, then could we say with confidence: date from that epocha 1260 years, and you will see the papacy cease to have "the saints," or, "the times and laws," in its hand or power; date 30 years from that era, and you will witness another remarkable occurrence: and if you have but the happiness to reach, in your prolonged earthly pilgrimage, five-and-forty years beyond the expiration of that thirty, you will see the advent of Messiah's kingdom, and the end of all these wonders.

The difficulty, of course, is to fix upon that event in history which marks this giving of "the saints," or of "the times and laws," into the hand of the papacy. Various dates have been assigned by different authors. Mr. Mede hesitates between A. D. 365, 410, and 455, or 456. Mr. Bicheno names 529; Mr. Cuninghame, and Mr. Frere, 533: Mr. Man, that or 534; Mr. Sharp, 540; Mr. Piere, and Mr. Faber, 606; Mr. Milner, 727; so Bishop Newton, who mentions beside 755, 774, and 787. All these epochas mark some memorable increase, or supposed increase, of power and authority in papacy.¹

¹ Mr. Hallam thus marks the remarkable epochas of the advancing power of the papacy: "The foundations of the Roman primacy are indicated by Valentinian III. in a novel of the year 455. This prince, 'influenced by Leo the Great, one of the most ambitious of pontiffs, established almost an absolute judicial supremacy in the holy see'—'but, upon the whole, the papal authority had made no decisive progress in France; or,

perhaps, any where beyond Italy, till the pontificate of Gregory I.' His pontificate, from 509 to 604, is accordingly marked as another era in the rise of the papacy. Mr. Hallam observes, "It cannot, I think, be said that any material acquisitions of ecclesiastical power were obtained by the successors of Gregory, for nearly one hundred and fifty years." This brings us in the history of the papacy to the pontificate of Zachary. Mr. Hal-

But what date, or event, it is that has been fixed upon by the Spirit of prophecy, to be the *epocha* of the eras in question, seems involved in the same obscurity, as from what command to build Jerusalem, the seventy weeks of a former prophecy were to be dated. The accomplishment of the period, as we have seen in the former case, only explained the mystery. So, probably, the expiration of this period of 1260 years will alone show when it began; or, perhaps, not that, but the expiration of the 1290 years: and this seems to be now the impression upon the minds of most expositors.

The dates suggested by Mr. Mede have already proved premature; we may say the same of Mr. Bicheno's. The next date, 533, which has some very probable circumstances about it, will almost immediately be put to the proof. This hypothesis supposes an edict of the emperor Justinian, publicly and legislatively acknowledging the pope as the head and judge of all priests and churches, to have been the *epocha* of giving the times and laws into the hand of the little horn. Mr. Cuninghame takes the ides of March 533, as the date of this decree; 1260 years dated from this, brings us to the spring of 1793; and before the expiration of the last of these years, (which is according to the usual mode of counting by current time,) viz. on the 10th of August, 1792, the French Revolution

lam particularly points to a synod of the French and German bishops, held at Frankfort, in 742, by Boniface, his legate. "It was here enacted, that as a token of their willing subjection to the see of Rome, all metropolitans should request the pallium at the hands

of the pope, and obey his lawful commands."—"The council of Frankfort claims a leading place, as an epoch in the history of the papacy. Several events ensued, chiefly of a political nature, which rapidly elevated that usurpation almost to its greatest height."

had taken place ; an event, which, besides its immediate effects on the power of the papacy, may well be suspected to have marked that change in the sentiments and policy of the Roman Catholic nations, which will no more permit the bishop of Rome to be the arbiter of times and laws, or to employ the civil powers of their respective states, to wreck his vengeance on those that will not submit to his idolatrous superstition.

Should this hypothesis be correct, we must date from the same ides of March, A. D. 533, 1290 years for the occurrence of some other remarkable event. This will bring us to the spring of 1823. This, then, will be the proof of this hypothesis. If within this period an event should take place of that character or importance, that we must suppose it to be that which the Spirit had in view, then we shall know the times of the last troubles are near at hand indeed ; and in forty-five years from that epocha, that is, in the year of our Lord 1868, the hope of Israel, and of all the ends of the earth, appears.

But what remarkable event is it, which we are to expect at the end of the 1290 years ? This, we should be careful to remember, we are no where expressly taught in prophecy. It has been supposed by some to be “the cleansing or vindicating of the sanctuary,” foretold in a former prophecy, and dated 2300 years from an epocha, like that in the present prophecy, not clearly ascertained. We shall remember, however, that one hypothesis, for the adjustment of that era, gave for its close 1821, 1830, or 1836—dating the 2300 years from the failure of the expedition of Xerxes against Greece, from the end of the war, or from the death of that prince. Nor can we say that even the autumn of 1821—though it must have antedated the unknown epocha ; and we ought, it is clear, to include

some other events in Xerxes' expedition after the battles of Plataea and Mycale, supposing that expedition the true era;—yet even the autumn of this present year has not passed without some indication, that events of the character which was supposed to be predicted in the symbolical language of prophecy—"the cleansing" or "vindicating of the sanctuary"—may shortly be expected to be developed. I refer to the present commotions in Greece and Turkey, and the political situation of Russia: but time alone can explain. There is enough, however, of probability in the hypothesis, to keep the waiting family of the Lord on their watch, with their "loins girded and their lamps burning:" and this we may say in general, whatever perplexity remains from the different readings of different copies; whatever ignorance may yet prevail in knowing how to affix the several dates of the times and seasons; whatever inaccuracies there may be in the received chronologies, there seem considerable grounds to conclude, that **THE TIME IS FAST APPROACHING!**

With respect to the several parties engaged in the last conflict, and the scene of their operations, as represented in the prophecy which we have been considering, we may almost say, the late revolutionary war has developed them, or something like them, to our view; and though not in the way predicted, they actually occupied the stations and took the ground which they, or other nations like them, will occupy in the last conflict; so that they have, in a remarkable manner, illustrated the language of prophecy, though they have not fulfilled it: they have shown in their leading movements, as it were by way of imperfect *rehearsal*, how the prediction may be accomplished.

We saw many of the separate sovereignties of the Roman empire combined to act together by the genius of one man, and the military prowess of one people: the divided empire discovered more than usual, for a short time at least, that it still had in it "of the strength of iron." The antichristian and atheistical character of the leading power of the times was, too, such as before its rise we could hardly have imagined among those who had been so long the abject slaves of superstition. We saw also how the *crafty politician* could still coalesce and act in unison with the former enemy of the people of God, whose power he seemed to have broken, and whose "great words" he could but despise: so that, according to the same word of prophecy, they might both have fallen together. We saw also a king of the south push at him: a power not in possession of Egypt indeed, as we expect will be the case hereafter, yet a power who could and did wrest Egypt from his hand, and a power who had, in its intercourse with India—with the countries beyond the rivers of Cush—covered the southern seas with its ships, and filled their ports with its mingled merchants and warriors: illustrating the language of prophecy, "the merchants of Tarshish with the young lions thereof," in a manner most extraordinary.

We saw also the king of the north engaged in furious contest with the apostate. The issue was not according to the prophecy, for the time was not yet come. Buonaparte's empire was disunited, "the iron would not mix with the clay:" the victories of the Russian with his allies discovered it to be "partly weak" as well as "partly strong:" but the several parts still remain, once more to combine, in order to execute the purposes of God. It is remarkable, too, that the apostate power did actually,

during this contest, enter into "the glorious land!" but not, as the prophecy foretold, from the north, having subdued the north, to go to reduce Egypt, but from the south, Egypt being in his possession. He actually encamped in the plain of Armageddon, but he found "no Israel restored"—"no land brought back from the sword." He was come without his commission, and soon caused to retreat. But this *rehearsal*, if I may so call it, wonderfully, to my mind, discovers the parties to be engaged in the last conflict, and shows how the political interests and relative situations of the present nations of the civilized world may bring them together on the very spot marked out by the unerring word of prophecy.

SECTION XXII.

Extracts from the Prophet Habakkuk.

I SHALL detain the reader with only a short reference to the prophet Habakkuk, who is to be numbered with the prophets of the captivity. His leading subject, as appears from chapter i. verse 6, is the near approach of the Babylonian invasion; but from a comparison of the parallel prophecies, we shall, perhaps, suspect an ultimate allusion to the last great destroyer. The mystic Babylon seems especially to come in view in the second chapter. The vision is stated to be "yet for an appointed time;" but we are admonished, "that at the end it will speak clearly,—it will not be found false. If it delay," or, according to the form of the original, if it seem to hesitate in coming, "wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not be behind its time."

There follows a clear description, much to be remarked, of the source of that corruption which, in the latter ages, is to generate the great apostate : —

Lo, it is lifted up, ¹ his soul is not upright within him,
But the just by his faith shall live.

The pride of the unregenerated heart, which, at the same time that it disguises the real wants of fallen nature, rejects the Gospel doctrine of justification by faith alone, is considered as the first spring and origin of all corruption and apostacy in the professing church. For those wants of fallen nature are desperate, and cannot be long concealed, in the hour of distress ; or where poverty, or some other calamity, has abated the swellings of pride, and laid bare the discovery of human wretchedness. The consequence is, some weak superstition must be invented by those who make merchandise of religion, in order to appease the cravings of uneasy consciences, and by a spiritual intoxication, as it were, to lull the suspicions of their votaries asleep, or to inspire themselves with delusive madness against Christ and his approaching kingdom.

6. Surely as, when wine deceiveth a man,
He raveth ² and remaineth not at rest.
He enlargeth his desire as Hades,
He is as death, that cannot be satisfied.
But gathereth to him all the nations,
And assembleth to him all the peoples.

I conceive this marks the rise of the apostate empire of the latter days, rather than the ambitious schemes of

¹ Compare عفل "Tumore laboravit."

² See Simon in ידיר ; and compare יזר "vesano impetu ruere."

the literal Babylon. The apostacy begins with a proud opposition to the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, and in the end erects a fabric of superstition that rewards its builders with the wealth and dominion of the world: but the fate of this mystic Babylon is the same as denounced in the former prophets,—see verses 6—13. “The peoples labour for the fire; the nations weary themselves for a vain thing.”

14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory
of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea.¹

The intoxication of the victim of judgment is again described, whether literal or spiritual:² his character as a persecutor is glanced at:³ his vain idolatry is lastly described:⁴ but mark by what this last system of idolatrous superstition is superseded:

20. But Jehovah is in his holy temple,
Let all the earth keep silence before him.

¹ Isaiah, xi. 9.

² Ver. 15, &c.

³ Ver. 17.

⁴ Ver. 18, 19.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROPHETS AFTER THE RESTORATION.

SECTION I.

Extracts from the Prophet Haggai.

WE may now proceed to the last division of the Old Testament prophets—those who prophesied after the Babylonian captivity: these were Haggai,* Zechariah, and Malachi. Haggai will not detain us long. In the third verse of the second chapter of his prophecy, we have, however, a plain reference to those glorious scenes of the last days, which the former prophets have been inspired to reveal.

Some of the older Jews, who had seen the temple of Solomon before the captivity, were much grieved and disappointed at the sight of the meaner structure that occupied its site, after their return from Babylon. To these sorrowing and afflicted Jews the prophet is sent with the following message.

3. Who is there among you that is left,
Who saw this house in its former glory?
And what do ye see it now?
Is it not as a mere nothing in your eyes?
4. But now be strong, Zerubbabel, hath Jehovah said,
And be strong, Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest.

* Supposed to have prophesied about five hundred and twenty years before Christ.

And be strong, all ye people of the land, hath Jehovah said,
And work, for I am with you, hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

5. According to the covenant that I made with you ; when ye
came out of Egypt,
My Spirit hath remained in the midst of you ; fear not.

6. Surely thus hath Jehovah said,
Yet once ' more,' a little while,
And I will shake the heavens and the earth,
And the sea and the dry land :

7. I will shake all the nations,
And they shall come that are the desire of all nations.

" And they shall come that are the desire of all nations :"—such is a literal rendering of this celebrated line.¹ The reader may see, in Parkhurst and Archbishop Newcombe, what may be said for the common interpretation, and the changes necessary to be made in the present text to support it. But no changes of the present text are surely necessary or warrantable here ! The shaking of the nations is that great last convulsion and revolution of the kingdoms of men, of which we have read so much, and which is succeeded by the second advent, the coming of Christ with all his saints.* Hence we perceive the reason why a plural verb is used : " They shall come,"—" the Messiah and his glorified saints,"—" the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom."† The prophecy proceeds : —

¹ ובאו חמדת כל הנהים. The Septuagint has, *Kai ηξει τα εκλεκτα παντων των εθνων.*

* Jude, 14 ; 1 Sam. ii. 8 ; Psalms lxviii. 17 ; l. ; cxlix ; Isaiah, xiii. 3 ; xxv. 7 ; xxvi. 19 ; Micah, ii. 13 ; Daniel, vii. 22 ; and xii.

† Compare Rom. viii. 18—24.

And I will fill this house with glory,
Hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

8. The silver shall be mine, and the gold shall be mine,
Hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

Great shall be the glory of this house,

9. The latter greater than the former,
Hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

And in this place will I give peace,
Hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

“The silver and the gold shall be mine:”—men shall honour me with their precious things in my restored temple: the temple here referred to is, no doubt, that, the erection and dedication of which was foretold in Ezekiel. Archbishop Secker has justly observed, that in Ezra, chap. v. 11—13, the house that was built, destroyed, and rebuilt, is made the *same* house. Therefore, this ninth verse should be understood, not of the glory of a former and latter house, but the former and latter glory of a house, considered as the same house. In the third verse it is, “the former glory of this house.”

To the same times we are to refer the prophecy in the latter part of the chapter:*

I will shake the heavens and the earth,
And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms,
And will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations.
And I will overthrow the chariot and him that rideth therein,
And the horses and their riders shall come down,
Each by the sword of his brother.

In that day, hath Jehovah Sabaoth said,
I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel,
To be my servant; hath Jehovah said:

* Ver. 22, 23.

And I will make thee as a signet,
For thee have I chosen; hath Jehovah said.

Zerubbabel is here to be considered, either as a type of the Messiah,* his exaltation as governor of Israel being denoted, when all human power and grandeur is laid low; — or Zerubbabel may stand for his successors, princes of Israel, after the erection of Messiah's kingdom. For he is Jehovah Sabaoth; and we know the prince of Israel is to be highly distinguished in HIS kingdom, when the thrones of kingdoms are no more, as we have read in Jeremiah and in Ezekiel.

SECTION II.

Remarks on Parts of the First, Eighth, and Ninth Chapters of Zechariah.†

IN the prophet Zechariah, we shall find a good deal which may well be supposed to refer to the events of the second advent; but I shall dwell chiefly on those parts, which are admitted on all hands to have immediate reference to that awful period.

The “four horns,” which are described in the latter part of the first chapter as having “scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” I conceive, with many expositors, to be symbols of the four great monarchies, so much the subjects of former prophecies. Instruments of destruction are represented as prepared for each of them: —

20, 21. “To fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gen-

* Lowth.

† From about 520 to 518 before Christ.

tiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."

The measuring of the land after this, as symbolically described in the opening of the second chapter, should be referred, I think, ultimately to the final restoration. If so, "Daughter of Babylon," in the seventh verse, must have a spiritual, as well as a literal meaning; or the sixth, and three following verses, may be considered as an episode; pointing out what is immediately to be done for the church, in order in due course to bring about the glorious scenes predicted. The prosperity of Jerusalem, after the return from Babylon, might be a faint type; but, I think, could never have fulfilled the prophecy of the fourth and fifth verses:—

"Jerusalem shall be inhabited like towns without walls," or, "after the manner of villages—in village fashion¹ shall Jerusalem be inhabited,—for the multitude of men and cattle therein; for I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round her, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

Jerusalem will not be found to have been thus tenanted, from the period of her restoration to her destruction by the Romans. As little will the description of "Jerusalem inhabited as villages" agree with what we have learned will be the final destiny of the holy hills, when the "city of the Lord's house" is to

¹ "It shall overflow with inhabitants, who shall occupy spaces beyond the circuit of the walls. A city is then said to be inhabited *κατα κομῆς*, *vicatim*. Vitranga refers the literal completion of this

prophecy to the time of the Macabees; but thinks that the protection and glory of the future Jerusalem may also be predicted."
—NEWCOMBE.

be erected thereon. But we should bear in mind, that Jerusalem, after the present desolation, is to be first of all rebuilt by a part of the Israelitish nation and their allies, previously to the troubles of the last times and previously to the attack of the last foe upon their country. This is the city here described, as appears from the prophetic address in Ezekiel* to this last foe: "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of UNWALLED VILLAGES; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates; to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods that dwell in the midst of the land." I conceive, also, the parable of the unwallèd vineyard in Isaiah refers to this period of the inceptive restoration of Israel in the land of promise, where they wait the last attack of the European adversary, and the interposition of the manifested Redeemer. It is respecting this subsequent manifestation that I understand the latter part of this chapter.

10. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion;
For lo, I come and dwell in the midst of thee,
Hath Jehovah said:
11. And many nations shall be joined unto Jehovah in that day,
And they shall be to me for a people, and I will dwell in
the midst of thee,
And thou shalt know that Jehovah Sabaoth had sent me
unto thee:
12. And Jehovah shall inherit Judah,

* Chap. xxxviii. 11, 12.

His lot 'shall fall' upon the holy land;
And he shall still choose Jerusalem.

13. Be silent, O! all flesh, before Jehovah,
For he is risen from his holy habitation!

The prophetical emblem of the BRANCH, in the latter part of the third chapter, and in the sixth chapter, doubtless belongs to Christ; but his "growing up out of his place, his building the temple of Jehovah, his sitting and ruling as a priest upon his throne," may refer primarily to his incarnation, his formation of his church, "as lively stones built into a spiritual temple," and to his present station "at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The prophecy contained in the eighth chapter may too, possibly, be understood generally, as describing all the spiritual blessings which the world should receive from Jerusalem, and from the restored Jews, at various periods of their history; but, especially, when the great Gentile nations, at the era which succeeds the sending of the SON OF GOD and his SPIRIT, renounced their own religions, and embraced that of Moses and the prophets, as fulfilled by "him that was to come." I cannot but think, however, with most commentators, that the complete fulfilment of these predictions will be when the kingdom is finally restored to Israel. Then, agreeably with former prophecies, will *this* scene be more fully realized:—

23. "Thus hath Jehovah Sabaoth said, In that day, moreover, shall ten men take hold from all the languages of the nations, they shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a

¹ " $\rho\eta\eta$, pars, portio خلق , sorte data, ut $\chi\eta\phi\sigma$, $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\sigma$ hinc $\rho\eta\eta$, propr. *lapillus*, deinde *sors*, *portio* divisit."—SIMON.

Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Again; to whatever times and circumstances the seven first verses of the ninth chapter may apply, it is clear that the eighth verse glances at the final establishment of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IX.

8. And I will encamp a host at my house, passing and returning;¹

And the oppressor shall no more pass over them,
For now have I seen with mine eyes.

And in this place, again, the Spirit of prophecy, in a remarkable manner, contrasts together the events of the two advents, which has induced me to take up here the thread of the prophetic discourse.

9. Exult greatly, O daughter of Zion;
Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem;
Behold, thy King shall come to thee.

He shall be vindicated, and made victorious,
"Though he be" poor, and rideth on an ass,
Even on a colt, the foal of asses.

This I humbly conceive to be the true structure of the Hebrew in this passage: — He who will once be seen as a poor and afflicted man, with such *unkingly* state entering his city of Jerusalem, will one day be vindicated in his rightful claims to the throne of Israel;² and shall be saved, or according to the full force of the term,³ shall be rendered victorious. Then shall the people of Jeru-

¹ Passing to and fro, like soldiers on guard. ² צָרַק. ³ נָשַׁע.

salem, that on the occasion here glanced at rejected him — then shall they “see” him, and “say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.”

10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem,
And the battle bow shall be cut off.

This has been differently understood, either as renouncing the assistance of the arms of human warfare; or, as I rather incline from what follows, as implying the cutting off the adversaries of Jerusalem and of Israel.

And he shall speak peace to the nations,
And his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
And from the river to the extremities of the land.

That is to say, his peculiar dominion, as described in Ezekiel, over the tribes of Israel, in the new division for their country. This is the royal residence, as it were; but the kingdom of Messiah extends, we know, over all the nations of the earth.

What follows is addressed by the Almighty Father to the Messiah, — or, as some suppose, to Zion: —

11. And with respect to thee,¹ by the blood of thy covenant,
I will send forth thy prisoners from the pit,
“The pit” in which is no water.
Return to your fortress, ye prisoners of hope;
Even this day do I declare,
I will restore double “blessings” unto you.

This passage strikes me as referring to the state of the dead, as that state is affected by the Redeemer’s entrance

¹ The construction is the nominative absolute.

into the world of spirits: he becomes "the Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," and hath redeemed his people from the hand of hell. This I conceive to be "the pit, in which is no water." The saints of Christ, before his death and resurrection, had ever been delivered from going down into this pit; for though prisoners, and visibly seized upon by Death as such, yet they were HIS prisoners; and though the ransom was not paid, it was stipulated in the divine counsels, and availed for them. Wherever, therefore, God kept in safety their departed souls, they were in their fortress, "prisoners of hope," or prisoners expecting their Deliverer; and double blessings would they receive at his "coming into the world" — the world of departed spirits. This seems to be corroborated by what the Evangelist intimates of the change in the state of departed saints, when Christ died and rose again. Or, as I rather incline, we are to understand by "the fortress," the high places of Jerusalem; whither, when he comes, as we have learned from former prophecies, he will bring his saints with him.

13. For I have bent Judah for me,
 And have filled my bow with Ephraim,
 And I have raised up thy sons, O Zion.

A strong and sublime manner of expressing, that God would use Judah and Ephraim as his instruments of destruction. This will be illustrated by a subsequent prophecy. As Ephraim is mentioned with Judah, it must refer to a season yet to come, when the ten tribes shall be brought back from the place of their captivity.

- Above thy sons, O Grecia!
 Though I have made thee as the sword of a warrior;
 14. For Jehovah shall be seen over them.

That is to say, the victories of the restored Israelites, with Jehovah at their head, shall far exceed the victories of Greece, which the world had soon to witness; though Greece would be an instrument in the hand of the same God, to overthrow the nations of the then world.

And his arrows shall go forth as lightning,
And the Lord Jehovah shall sound the trumpet,
And shall march with the whirlwinds of the south.

15. Jehovah Sabaoth shall be a shield over them,
And they shall consume ' with the sword,' and subdue with
sling-stones;
And they shall drink ' blood,' and shout as from wine.
And they shall be filled as the bowl,¹ and the corners of the
altar:²
16. And Jehovah their God will give them the victory,
In that day shall they be as the flock of his people:
And crowned trophies³ shall shine over their land;
17. Truly, how great is their prosperity! how great their beauty!
Corn doth nourish their youth, and wine their virgins.

This seems to be the state of prosperity and happiness usually foretold in the prophecies, as awaiting Israel after the destruction of the last foe. What follows seems designed to expose the futility of the idolatrous and superstitious worship of that foe. That Israel's last enemy will be idolators, we have often heard from the sacred oracle.

¹ The bowl used in sacrifice, COMBE.
to contain the blood of sprinkling.

² "The corners at the base of the altar, where the blood was poured out. Lev. iv. 25."—NEW-

³ "Lapides emicantes, h. e. trophæa coronata quæ eminent et sint splendida victoriæ signa."—SIMON.

CHAPTER X.

1. Ask ye of Jehovah rain at the season of the spring showers,
Jehovah maketh the lightning and the rain,
—The plentiful rain—HE gives them,—to man, the grass of
the field.
2. Surely the images have spoken vanity,
And the diviners have seen a lie,
False dreams do they tell, that cannot comfort.
Therefore, are they gone away as a flock, they are brought
low;
3. Because no one fed them, mine anger was kindled against
the shepherds,
And the he-goats have I visited with punishment.

I conceive this refers to churches of the Gentiles, their rulers and great men become apostate to God, and destroying his flock by their neglect and misrule. As usual, we find Israel is the first object of the Redeemer's regard, and his instrument of good to the whole world.

Surely Jehovah Sabaoth will visit,
Even his flock, the house of Judah;
And will make them as his stately horse in battle.

That is to say, Judah is the great instrument he will make use of in the last victory. "Salvation is of the Jews," and from Judah, as it follows, every help is to be expected:—

4. From him 'is' the corner stone, and from him the nail;
From him is the battle bow,
From him goeth forth every ruler altogether:
5. And they shall be in the war, as men that tread the mire of
the streets;

And they shall fight, for Jehovah is among them,
And the rider on horses shall be confounded:

6. And I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And will render victorious the house of Joseph;
And I will restore them, for I have pitied them:

And they shall be as though I had not rejected them,
For I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them;

7. And Ephraim shall become a mighty one.

And their heart shall be gladdened as by wine,
And they shall see their sons and be glad,
And their heart shall rejoice in Jehovah.

8. I will call them, and will gather them, for I have redeemed them;

9. And they shall increase, as they did increase, for I will sow them among the nations;
And from distant places shall they remember me, and shall quicken¹ their children, and return.

10. I will bring them back from the land of Egypt,
And from Assyria will I gather them,
And to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them:
And place shall not be found for them.

11. And he shall pass through the sea 'with' distress 'unto it,'²
And shall smite the waves in the sea:
And all the depths of the river shall be dried up,
And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt depart;
And I will strengthen them in Jehovah, and in his name shall they walk,
Hath Jehovah said.

¹ Or, "shall invigorate," or, Dr. Blaney has, "He shall pass over the sea" to Tyre.

² So Archbishop Newcombe.

SECTION III.

Remarks on the Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Chapters of Zechariah.

WHAT is foreboded in the opening of the eleventh chapter is, apparently, a most destructive invasion of the Holy Land.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Open thy doors, O Lebanon,
That a fire may consume thy cedars.
2. Bewail, O fir tree, because the cedar is fallen,
Because the mighty ' trees' have perished.
Bewail, O ye oaks of Bashan,
Because the lofty¹ forest is felled.
3. Let there be a voice of wailing among the shepherds,
Because their glory² is destroyed.
Let there be a voice of roaring among the lions,
Because the pride³ of Jordan is destroyed.

This is nothing more than a topographical description of the country invaded, and marks the extent of the ravages of the enemy. The invasion of the Romans, immediately after the first advent, is generally supposed to be intended. What follows, under the typical repre-

¹ Or, " far seen;" from *بصر*,
ex alto prospexit, conspicuus fuit.

the best of their pastures.

² Their greatness, or their boast;
that is, the best of their flocks, or

³ The woods on its banks, frequented by lions.

sensation of the good Shepherd, mysteriously represented as “valued at thirty pieces of silver,” and under the representation of the idol shepherd, will contrast the character of the Saviour in the days of his flesh with the apostate leaders of the Jewish church, whose debasement and miserable infatuation is strongly painted — whence the low absurdities of the rabbinical school: and the “idol shepherd” may stand, perhaps, as a further type of the apostate Christian priesthood.

This leads us to the last prophecy of Zechariah,* entitled, “The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel,” which we shall find to relate altogether to the times which precede the second advent.

1. —Jehovah hath spoken,
Who stretched out the heavens, and founded the earth,
And formed the spirit of man within him :
2. Behold, I make Jerusalem
A cup of trembling to all the peoples around ;
Ay, even for Judah shall it be,
In the siege against Jerusalem.

“A cup of trembling,” or, “a cup causing delirium,” denoting the overwhelming astonishment with which the surrounding nations should behold the wonderful issue of a certain predicted siege of Jerusalem;† in which, to their great surprise and amazement, Judah and Jerusalem should obtain deliverance, and be avenged on all their adversaries. This is further expressed under the metaphor of a stone, that the nations attempt to elevate, the weight of which overpowers them, and crushes them to pieces.

* Chap. xii.

† Compare Isaiah, xxix. 3, &c. ; xlix. 24, &c. ; li. 12, &c.

3. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That I will render Jerusalem
A burdensome stone to all the nations.
All who burden themselves with it shall be much hurt,
Though all the nations of the earth are gathered against her.
4. In that day hath Jehovah said,
I will strike every horse with confusion,
And his rider with madness :
And to the house of Judah I will cause opening of eyes,
And every horse of the nations will I smite with blindness.
5. And the leaders of Judah shall say in their hearts,
There is strength to me and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,¹
In Jehovah Sabaoth, their God.
6. In that day will I make the leaders of Judah
As a furnace of fire to wood,
And as the torch of fire to the sheaf :
And they shall consume on the right hand and on the left,
All the nations that are round about,
And Jerusalem shall yet be inhabited in her place.²
7. And Jehovah shall save the tents of Judah first,³
So that the glory of the house of David may not be magnified,
Nor the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem above that of
Judah.

All this is still unaccomplished prophecy ; but I think former Scriptures throw some light upon it, especially Psalm lxxviii., where we gathered, that the Divine Presence would be first manifested to a people which it was leading though the desert, while the last storm should be raging through the Holy Land, and should at length centre its force on Jerusalem.

¹ Margin.

² Or, "in her place in peace."
See Newcombe.

³ Or, according to another reading, "as at the first," as in former times.

8. In that day will Jehovah be a Shield over the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
 And he that is feeble¹ in that day shall be as David,
 And the house of David shall be as Elohim — as the angel
 of Jehovah before them.
9. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That I will seek all nations to destroy them,
 That are come against Jerusalem :
10. And I will pour upon the house of David,
 And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
 A spirit of moaning² and supplication ;
 And they shall look on him whom they pierced,
 And they shall mourn over him as with the mourning over
 an only child,
 And the bitterness for him shall be as the bitterness for a
 first-born.

This strongly marks the first recognition of "JESUS whom they crucified," by the rulers and inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the true Messiah.

11. In that day the mourning shall be great in Jerusalem,
 As the mourning of Hadadrimmon in Megiddo.

Like the mourning for the loss of their king, when all Judah lamented the untimely fate of Josiah, who fell in the plains of Megiddo.

And the land shall mourn, every family apart.

12. The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart,
 The family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives
 apart.

The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart,
 The family of the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart.

¹ Or, "he that stumbled," or, "had fallen into decay."—BLANEY.

² See Simon in verbo.

All the families that remain,
Every family apart, with their wives apart.

“ This mourning of the Jews will take place at the reappearing of their Messiah from heaven, Apoc. i. 7, xx. 4, when the restored descendants of those Jews who slew him shall be touched with the deepest compunction for the guilt of their forefathers.”¹ The families here specified seem to mark out the inhabitants of Jerusalem at that era ; and we seem to gather that the royal house of David is not yet extinct among the Jews, and that it will be found among that first remnant that shall be settled at Jerusalem before the troubles of the last days. It is very clear, too, that the Israelites, thus restored to Jerusalem, are not, as to the main body of them, converted to the Christian faith, but are still Jews, and the mistaken followers of Moses. But now is the time of their receiving mercy.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. In that day shall be a fountain
Opened for the house of David,
And for the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
For sin and for uncleanness.
2. And it shall come to pass in that day,
Hath Jehovah Sabaoth said,
I will cut off the names of idols from the earth,
And they shall be no more mentioned :
And the prophets with the unclean spirit
Will I cause to pass out of the earth.

“ This prophecy,” as Dr. Blaney remarks, “ extends to the extirpation of idolatry in general ;” and we may

¹ Archbishop Newcombe.

add, of all impostures and delusions of Satan. "This event will take place when the Jews are converted to the Christian faith." What follows evidently relates to the presumptuous occupation of the prophetical office, by which, in various ways, the church had previously suffered so much.

3. And it shall come to pass when any shall yet prophesy,
That his father and mother shall say unto him,
Even his parents, Thou shalt not live,
Because thou hast spoken falsely in the name of Jehovah;
And his father and mother, his own parents,
Shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.
4. And it shall come to pass in that day,
The prophets shall be ashamed, each of his vision, when he
prophesieth;
Neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:
5. But he shall say, I am no prophet,
I am a cultivator of the earth,
I have served such a one from my youth.
And one shall say, What are those strokes in thy hand?
And he shall say, Those with which I have been marked in
the house of my friends.

This clearly predicts that in the time foretold the credulity of mankind shall no more be abused by false prophets and false teachers, and by those who clandestinely or presumptuously assume the ministerial office. "Two ancient customs are clearly alluded to here; that of the idolatrous prophets who sought to engage the attention of their God by cutting themselves, 1 Kings, xviii. 28; the other, that of those who cut themselves as a token of their grief and mourning for their deceased relations and friends, Jer. xvi. 6. It appears also, from

Jer. xlviii. 37, that these cuttings were performed on the hands in particular. Hence the man, when challenged for the scars visible in his hands, would deny them to have proceeded from an idolatrous cause, and pretend that they were wounds which he had given himself for the loss of his friends:¹ so that we have a clear prediction, under metaphors taken from the custom of the times, that all mankind shall at length become ashamed of all imposture, all false religions, and all fanatic inspirations, and, for the honour of God, will no longer “endure those who say they are apostles and are not.”

7. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
And against the man who is near unto me,²
Hath Jehovah said.

Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered,
And again will I turn my hand against the little ones.

8. And it shall be in all the land, saith Jehovah,
Two parts thereof shall be cut off and die,
But a third shall be left therein.

9. And I will bring that third through the fire,
And I will refine it as silver is refined,
And will prove it as gold is proved.

They shall call upon my name,
And I will answer them.

I will say, This is my people,
And they shall say, “Jehovah is my Elohim.”

Several commentators are of opinion, that the prophecy resumes in this place, and that it contemplates the Redeemer and his little flock at the first advent: but,

¹ Dr. Blaney. against the mighty one, my neigh-

² Or, “Against my friend, and bour.”

upon the whole, I accede to the opinion of Dr. Blaney, that "a new section commences here, but not a new prophecy: for, as far as we can judge," he observes, "of a prophecy before its accomplishment, it appears to be a continuation of the same subject which was entered upon at the beginning of chapter the twelfth, namely, the alarming invasion of Judah and siege of Jerusalem, by a numerous body of heathen nations. This, however, was soon broken off, in order to relate the means by which God would compass the deliverance of his people, and the blessed consequences thereof. But now the prophet reverts back to the time of the invasion, and notices some distressing circumstances which would attend its commencement; the first of these is specified in the remaining part of this chapter, by which we find, that the war would be so destructive that two-thirds of the people would be cut off, but that the remains, after struggling through various difficulties, would at length become converts to the Christian faith, and be again taken into the covenant with God."

Such is Dr. Blaney's view of this difficult passage. He thinks that our Saviour refers to it as to a proverbial saying, laying it down as a matter of course, for "the followers to disperse when their leader was taken off." Who the leader and the flock may be in this prophecy of future times, it is not easy to say. It seems, most probably, to denote the restored Israel, either that part led through the desert, or that part found by the adversary at Jerusalem. The head of their state or community, it seems, is cut off, with two-thirds of the people. The remaining third, reduced by various suffering, is acknowledged as the people of God. The prophecy may, possibly, refer to the Gentile churches and the spiritual head of apostate

Christendom, marked as the aspiring rival of the good Shepherd: but I rather incline to the former conjecture, from a comparison of the other Scriptures which relate to the sufferings of Israel in the troubles of the last days, and at the last siege of Jerusalem, Psalms l., lxxviii.; Isaiah, xlii. 22; Amos, ix. 10; Hosea, ii. 14, &c.; Jeremiah, xxxi. 2; Ezek. xx. 35, &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. BEHOLD a day cometh to Jehovah,
When thy spoil shall be divided within thee;
2. And I will gather all nations,
Against Jerusalem to war;
And the city shall be taken, and the houses plundered,
And the women defiled;
And a division of the city shall go into captivity,
But the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.¹

We have here most clearly a detailed account of the circumstances of the last siege of Jerusalem, answering to the remoter view which several prophecies, already considered, took of this important crisis.* Jerusalem is in the very grasp of the enemy, and a division is actually sent into captivity after ransacking the city:—at this decisive moment, the expected Deliverer comes out of Zion:—

¹ “ Si illi, qui post urbem expugnatam superstites erunt non delebuntur ex urbe, ergo ipsa urbs non delebitur—ergo haec relinquenda sunt ad tempora redditus Judæorum.”—HOUBIGANT.
“ Judæi hæc sub Eog dicunt esse complenda.—HIERON.

* Isaiah, xxix. Compare chap. li. 12, &c. Micah, iv. 11, &c.

3. And Jehovah shall go forth and fight against those nations,
As at the day when himself fighteth, in the day of conflict.
4. And his feet shall stand in that day
Upon the Mount of Olives,
Which is opposite to Jerusalem to the east :
And Jehovah, my Elohim, shall come,
And all his saints with him.

Thus Archbishop Newcombe renders the last two lines, on the authority of the versions and manuscripts mentioned in his notes : Dr. Blaney renders differently :

“ And Jehovah, God of all saints, shall go with thee.”

He observes, “ This is a literal translation of the text as it now stands, and affords a sense beyond exception or improvement. The address is here to Jerusalem, in the second person, and God, as the God of all ‘ holy ones,’ will march with her as her Ally and Auxiliary.” Here we clearly recognise the fulfilment of former oracles :—

“ Behold, the Lord cometh from heaven with his holy myriads,” &c. &c.

And the Mount of Olives shall be rent through,
In the midst thereof, eastward and westward,
“ So that there shall be” a very great valley :

And half the mountain shall recede towards the north,
And half of it towards the south .

5. And the valley of the mountains shall be choked up,¹
For the valley of the mountains will reach near.

¹ The Septuagint, Chaldee, and Arab. make נִסְתָּר the präter in niphāl of the verb סָתַר. See Blaney, who renders “ shall be choked up.” For אָוֵל, compare 1 Sam. xx. 19.

As it was choked up by the earthquake,
In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.¹

I understand this to be a literal description of a convulsion of nature, acknowledging the presence of the Deity, when the great Redeemer first manifests himself at Jerusalem, and conceive it to be only a more circumstantial prophecy of what has been intimated by former oracles.

6. "And it shall come to pass in that day,
There shall not be a bright-light and darkness ;²

7. But there shall be one day :
This is known unto Jehovah.

'There shall' not be day, and there shall not be night,
But it shall come to pass that at eventide there shall be light."

Such is the translation of Archbishop Newcombe. The meaning I take to be simply this : At the time predicted, as far as regards the holy mountains of the Lord's house, there shall no longer be the ordinary vicissitudes of day and night. "There shall not be *brightening light*, neither

¹ The Scripture is altogether silent in respect to this earthquake, except that it is just mentioned as an era or date, Amos, i. 1. Josephus describes it as having taken place when Uzziah invaded the priestly office and was smitten with leprosy, and adds, "before the city, at a place called the *Cleft*, one-half of the mountain on the western side was broken off, and having rolled four furlongs towards the eastern mountain, stopped ; so that the roads were choked up, and the king's gardens," &c.—

BLANEY, whose translation I have adopted. He considers אֵל, not as a proper name, but as an adverb, '*hard by*,' '*near at hand*.' Compare Vulgate.

² "A light of clearnesses," or "brightnesses," יֵרֵחַ יָקָר הַלֵּךְ : "The moon walking or increasing in brightness, in Job, xxxi. 26, well illustrates the meaning." "Read with the Keri, very many MSS. and nine ed. קָפֵאן, from קָפָא, *coagulare, condensare* ; whence, says Capellus, the substantive signifies *densa caligo, atra nox*."

shall there be *condensing darkness*," but all shall be one entire day; not day and night as now,—or as then, perhaps, to the rest of the earth,—but at the time of even light shall still appear to shine, even the glory of Jehovah. This is parallel to what we have read before, Isaiah, lx.:—

19. It shall continue to be *to thee* the sun for a light by day,
Nor, on her shining, 'shall' the moon give light *to thee*:

Thy sun shall no more go down,
Nor shall thy moon be withdrawn;

For Jehovah shall be to thee an everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

I may, therefore, venture to translate the two verses before us somewhat paraphrastically, as follows:—

6. And it shall come to pass in that day,
There shall not be brightening light and condensing darkness;

7. But there shall be one 'continued' day,
It shall know¹ 'the glory of' Jehovah!

Not day 'growing warm,' nor night 'involving in darkness,'²

But it shall be, that at eventide there shall be light.

To proceed:—

8. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That running waters shall go out from Jerusalem;

A portion of them towards the eastern sea,
And a portion of them towards the western sea;
Both 'in' summer and winter shall this be.

We have already anticipated the exposition of this

¹ "Perceive," "acknowledge," or "recognise,"—"be conscious of," or "experience."
² See the radical meanings of יָדָע and יָכַל.

part of the prophecy, in illustration of Ezekiel, chapter the forty-seventh, to which I may refer the reader.

9. And Jehovah shall become King¹ over all the earth,
In that day shall Jehovah be alone, and his name alone.

This clearly ascertains, that though the immediate throne, or rather sanctuary of the King Messiah, shall be at Jerusalem, and that the land of Israel is more immediately the seat of his kingdom; yet that the rule and dominion of this THEOCRACY extends over all the earth.

For the alterations in the face of the country next described, I refer again to the exposition of Ezekiel.

10. And the whole land shall be made round about as a plain,
From Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem;
And it² shall be elevated, and inhabited in its place;
From the gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate,
Even unto the corner gate;
And from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses;
And they shall dwell there, and there shall be no more destruction,
And Jerusalem shall abide in security.

For the mode in which the holy city of the Lord's house, occupying the site of Zion and Jerusalem, is to be tenanted, I refer to Ezekiel.

The prophecy next describes the catastrophe of those armies that had been gathered against Israel.

¹ Or, "be for king."

² The holy mountain of Jerusalem and Zion.

12. And this is the plague

With which Jehovah will strike all the nations,
Who have arrayed themselves against Jerusalem.

Their flesh shall consume away while they stand on their
feet,

And their eyes shall consume away in their sockets,
And their tongue shall consume away in their mouths.

This may illustrate several former predictions which treat of the destruction of the last enemy on the appearance of the great Redeemer: Jude, 14; Job, xix. 23, &c.; Deut. xxii. 40, &c.; Numb. xxiv. 24; 1 Sam. ii. 10; Psalm lxviii. ; cx. ; Isaiah, ii. 10, &c. ; xiii. ; xxv. ; xxvii. 1 ; xxix. 5 ; xxx. 30 ; xxxiii. ; xxxiv. ; xlix. 24, &c. ; lix. 17, &c. ; lxii. 8, &c. and the last chapter; Joel, iii. 1; Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. ; Daniel, xii.

All the armies of the enemy, it should seem, fall not exactly in the same way. It was said before, “ each by the hand of his neighbour:” so in the following lines:—

13. And it shall come to pass in that day,

That there shall be a great tumult from Jehovah among
them;

And they shall seize each on the hand of his fellow,
But his hand shall be raised against the hand of his fellow.

Or this may mean: each being equally stricken with amazement and terror, when one would lift up his hand to catch hold for protection on the one nearest him, he will find his neighbour's hand lifted up towards him for the same purpose.

14. And Judah shall fight at Jerusalem,

And shall collect the wealth of all nations round about,
Gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

—Judah, the people first saved by the manifested Saviour; those, probably, whom he had led through the desert. For they, according to the sixty-eighth Psalm, arrive at the Holy Land in time to share in the victory which the Mighty One of Israel achieves:—

Kings of armies flee — they flee,
And she that stayeth in the house divideth the spoil, &c.

We are next told that the fate of the animals that attend these immense armies of the nations shall be as the fate of their masters.

15. And so shall be the plague of the horse,
Of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass :
And of all the beasts that shall be in these camps,
Like unto this plague shall it be.

16. And it shall come to pass, that all which is left,
Of all the nations that came against Jerusalem,
Shall even go up from year to year,
To worship the King Jehovah Sabaoth,
And to keep the feast of tabernacles.

There is, it seems, to be a remnant of the apostate armies spared in mercy. It should seem, these do not return to their countries. How should they? Their countries are destroyed by the fire of Jehovah,—the country of all those, at least, that came from the dominion of the fourth empire. These are they, perhaps, that are possessed for servants and handmaids to Jehovah in the land of Israel, according to Isaiah, chap. xiv. 2.

To proceed :—

17. And it shall be that whosoever will not go up,
Of the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem,

To worship the King, Jehovah Sabaoth,
There shall be on them no rain.

The term rendered "the earth" in this passage may be rendered "the land;" and the difficulty to us of supposing that some of every family of the whole earth should go up once a year to Jerusalem, seems to be very great. What follows, however, certainly extends the term "the land," or "the earth," far beyond the territories of the tribes,

18. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not,
And there be not to them the plague,
With which Jehovah will smite the nations,
Which come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles;
This sin of Egypt shall be the same
As the sin of all the nations,
Which go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The threatened plague may not affect the Egyptians, because Egypt is peculiarly situated in this respect; it depends not on the showers of heaven, but on the flowings of the Nile. Their sin, however, is the same, and its punishment will not be wanting. Egypt, therefore, is plainly among the nations on whom this service is imposed; and how many nations besides, or whether all the earth that remains, and in what manner it can be accomplished, the fulfilment, perhaps, only can teach: but we remark, Egypt, in regard to its peculiarities of climate, continues, what it was, in the glorious reign of the Elohim of Israel.

20. And in that day there shall be
On the bells of the horses "holiness to Jehovah."

"Holiness to Jehovah," or "holy to Jehovah," was

the inscription on the high priest's mitre. The same sanctity of character, it seems to be implied, shall then be given even to the very inferior animals that are employed in the service of the temple, that is to say, of the holy city of the Lord's house; for all Jerusalem, and all Zion, and the whole area of the elevated mountains, are within the precincts of the temple, and its very beasts of burden are to be regarded as consecrated to Jehovah. It follows: —

21. And it shall be, that the pots in the house of Jehovah
Shall be like the bowls before the altar;
And it shall come to pass that every vessel in Jerusalem
and in Judah
Shall be holy to Jehovah Sabaoth:
And all who sacrifice shall come,
And shall take them and prepare food in them;
And there shall be no more a trafficker
In the house of Jehovah Sabaoth in that day.

There is something highly mysterious in this language; but perhaps the facts already stated from Ezekiel will serve to explain. All Jerusalem is contained in the temple; and the holy oblation of land around the holy mount extends beyond the limits of what once was Judah — nay, somewhat of a priestly and ministerial character is conferred on all the children of Israel — in the several lotments of their tribes — or when they serve the city — or when they approach the holy mountain of the Lord's house.

3. And they shall be called the trees of righteousness,
The plantation of Jehovah for his glory:
They shall restore the ancient desolations,
They shall repair the ruins of former times;

And they shall build the cities that have been destroyed,
That have laid waste from generation to generation :

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
And the sons of the alien shall be your husbandmen and
vine-dressers :

But ye shall be called the priests of Jehovah,
“ Ministers of our Elohim ” shall they call you.

Ye shall consume the wealth of the nations,
And have command over their honours, &c. *

SECTION IV.

Malachi.

LASTLY : In the prophet Malachi † we have two passages which plainly refer to the advent of the expected Saviour ; and as the events of the first advent cannot be said to have exhausted their meaning, nor adequately to have fulfilled their predictions, we must necessarily look to another coming of the Saviour.

CHAPTER III.

1. Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me,

And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple :

Even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight ;
Behold, he cometh, hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

“ My messenger,” as expositors in general assert, applies to John the Baptist. “ The Messenger,” or

* Isaiah, lxi.

† Before Christ 420.

“Angel of the covenant,” is a title of the great Redeemer: He is the Bearer of the glad tidings to the church of the covenant which he hath made for their salvation with the eternal Father. This prophecy, indeed, might be referred exclusively to the first advent and its precursor: but there are expressions in the following verses that seem to embrace the events of the second advent; and, indeed, “the Lord’s,”—or, “the great—Lord’s suddenly coming to his temple” seems to refer more strictly to the solemn occupation of the last temple by the Divine Presence, as described in Ezekiel, than to any particular event, that we can point out in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

2. But who shall abide the day of his coming,
Or who shall stand when he appeareth?
For he shall be as the refiner’s fire,
And as the fuller’s soap:
3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver,
And shall purify the sons of Levi;
And he shall purge them as gold and silver,
And they shall bring near an offering to Jehovah in righteousness:
4. And the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing
to Jehovah,
As in the days of old, as in the former years.

Certainly, considered as altogether figurative language, this might be applied to what eventually took place at the first advent. The humbling and holy doctrines which Jesus taught, proved an offence and an occasion of falling to that very people, who professed to delight in the prospect of the coming of their Messiah; and the consequence was, the Jewish priesthood was discarded, and a new ministry of the word and sacraments

instituted: but, upon the whole, I cannot think this to be the meaning of the prophecy. Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, expressly disclaims the character of judge and divider,* and as clearly claims it for himself when he shall come again in his kingdom; and this is the character symbolized by “the refiner’s fire” and “the fuller’s soap.” Again; it would not be agreeable to the usual style of Scripture prophecy, to understand the “purifying of the sons of Levi,” concerning the superseding of that priesthood, and the substituting of the Christian ministry in its place; nor would “the offering” of their ministrations be called the “offering of Judah and Jerusalem,” contrasting its former with its present state, as in the passage before us. At the same time, we know from other prophecies,† that the priesthood of Levi is to be restored, and that acceptable offerings are again to be offered on the holy hill of Jerusalem; and that the re-establishment of this priesthood and of these sacrifices will be the issue of the manifestation of the Divine Presence in the last temple. By every rule of Scriptural interpretation, therefore, we must refer this prophecy to the second advent.

The last prophecy is that contained in the last chapter, which seems more exclusively to point to the second advent:—

CHAPTER IV.

1. For, behold, the day cometh, burning as a furnace,
And all the proud and all that do iniquity are stubble;
And the day that cometh shall burn them up, hath Jehovah
said,
So that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

* Luke, xii. 14.

† Psalm li. 19; Isaiah, lxvi. 21; Jer. xxxiii. 18, 21, and 22; Ezekiel, xx. 41, 42. Compare xxxvii. 26, &c.

This certainly characterizes neither the merciful intent of the first advent, nor that utmost meekness and forbearance of the blessed Saviour in the days of his flesh! And have the wicked been destroyed, so that neither root nor branch is left? No: this must apply to that emphatic day, when "the Lord Jesus is to be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance," as we have seen in former prophecies.

2. But there ariseth on you that fear my name,
A Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings,
And ye shall go forth, and spread abroad like calves from the stalls:
3. And ye shall tread down the wicked,
For they shall be as dust beneath the soles of your feet,
In the day when I do this, hath Jehovah Sabaoth said.

The entire subjection and destruction of the wicked, and the triumph of the people of God, must, by every analogy of prophecy, be referred to the second advent. The rising of the Sun of Righteousness must also be referred to that era; and righteousness, according to the usual employment of this word in the prophetic parts of Scripture, will denote the vindication of the people of God in all those rights, and in all that glory, which is their due, as the brethren and joint heirs of Christ. This is "the manifestation of the sons of God." The metaphor is that of the sun arising after the wintry storms are dispersed, reviving the face of nature, and permitting the stalled cattle to roam at large. The title "Sun of Righteousness"—"MINISTER of righteous judgment"—may be illustrated from the language of the nineteenth Psalm.

The clear reference of "the day of Jehovah" here spoken of—"the day of Christ's appearing and kingdom"

—has led also to the conclusion, that something further is meant than the mission of John the Baptist, in the close of the prophecy : —

5. Behold, I send to you Elijah the prophet,
Before the day of Jehovah cometh,
The great and the dreadful day!
6. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers together with the
children,¹
And the heart of the children together with the fathers,
That I come not to smite the land with a curse.

John's ministry, the New Testament informs us, certainly was, in some sense, a fulfilment of this prophecy : but, it appears, it did not completely fulfil it; as that advent, which he preceded, did not completely fulfil the prophecies of "the day of Jehovah."

Do not the Scriptures themselves afford us the proper distinction? — "John came *in the spirit and power of Elias*," and *typically* fulfilled the prophecy; but he was strictly right when he asserted himself, "I am not Elias:" and the words of our Lord, when he was descending from the mount of transfiguration, "Elias verily cometh and restoreth all things," may be fairly taken to assert, Elijah *will* come. Our Lord says, indeed, Elias is come, in reference to the Baptist's mission; but that may be understood in the typical sense before alluded to. Nor can I conceive that, in any sense whatever, the event of John's ministry can be called "the restoring of all things." I conceive, then, the "Scribes" are right when they say, as they do say to this day, "Elias will first come:" but

¹ See Archbishop Newcome's note.

what this ultimate coming of Elijah means, a future day must explain.

Thus we conclude our review of the prophecies of the Old Testament respecting the coming of Christ—especially respecting his glorious appearing in the last days.

We cannot but reflect how much remains to be fulfilled; nor can we be altogether surprised, that the Jews of the first advent,—and even the chosen disciples of our Lord, until they were spiritually taught to know the necessity of the CROSS OF CHRIST,—should have felt prejudice and disappointment, when they compared the life and achievements, and the death of Jesus of Nazareth, with the glorious themes of the ancient prophets respecting Messiah's victorious career and everlasting reign. But *they* were blessed who were not offended in him—whose “hearts were directed,” by divine influence, “into the love of God,” and what the apostle to the Gentiles still calls—after the first advent, observe—“the patient waiting for Jesus Christ.”

THE
SECOND ADVENT, &c.

PART THE THIRD.

*Prophecies relating to the Second Advent, in the New
Testament.*

INTRODUCTION.

IN seeking for intimations of the second advent, and its attendant events, in the New Testament, I shall pursue the same method which we have followed in reviewing the Old, observing generally the chronological order of the passages to be adduced. With these views, Dr. Macknight's Harmony of the Four Gospels will be a convenient guide through this portion of the New Testament. I shall accordingly, for the most part, adopt his order.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOSPELS AND THE ACTS.

SECTION I.

The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary.

INTIMATIONS of a second advent are found in the New Testament as early as the angel's annunciation to the Virgin Mary, respecting the HOLY BEING, whom she was miraculously to conceive in her womb:—

“Thou shalt” “bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”*

The subsequent history of our Lord, in the days of his flesh, forbids us to apply this prophecy to that era. The Son of David, at that time, found no throne; the scene of his exaltation was the shameful cross; he wore no crown, but the crown of thorns; the reedy sceptre, forced into his hands, mocked, in his dying hours, the pretensions of his Majesty! So neither can that part of the prophecy before us, which speaks of the “throne of David,” of “reigning over the house of Jacob,” be applied to the exaltation of the blessed Jesus at his resurrection. He was then, indeed, “declared to be the Son of God in power;” but to “sit down at the right

* Luke, i. 31, &c.

hand of the Majesty on high, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool," was not, in any sense, to gain possession of "the throne of his father David." Nor can the reins of the providential government, which are committed to the risen Saviour, and which he retains in his own hands, be considered as reigning over the house of Jacob,—as it is written, "from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth." His spiritual reign in the hearts of the Israel of God might, indeed, be considered as no unmeet antitype of this reigning over the house of Jacob; yet this government the Redeemer does not now personally exercise—not here on earth at least—but, as it is represented in Scripture, in his absence has committed his flock to the personal care and management of the HOLY GHOST THE COMFORTER. We have learned, however, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, that "the tabernacle of David, which is thrown down," is again to be "erected," and that after "the children of Israel shall have abode many days without a king," they shall, "in the latter days, return and seek unto Jehovah their God and David their king;" and that He that now sitteth at the right hand of God, shall come again into this lower world, and shall reign in Jerusalem, and from Zion, his first dominion, shall govern the nations upon earth.

By every rule of interpretation, therefore, the prophecy we are considering must be referred to that season; and we shall have abundant opportunity to remark on several passages which are to come before us, that a real and personal reigning of their Messiah over Israel, as the Head of the nations of the world, was what the Jews of our Lord's days—including his own disciples—were fully expecting in view of his appearing.

Such was evidently the kingdom which *they* were waiting to see manifested, who believed the report when the Baptist, and the early messengers of Jesus, proclaimed “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” From the Old Testament prophecies, they could hardly have expected any other in its full development. Only this they had overlooked, that, according to the same Scriptures, the foundations of this glorious kingdom must be laid in the sufferings, in the death, and in the spiritual victories of the LORD MESSIAH. This oversight he severely blames, on a subsequent occasion, in his own disciples,—“O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and [then] to enter into his glory?”

Thus the ancient father, Irenæus, represents the spiritual Christian as about to judge the Jews : * “in that they are willingly ignorant that all the prophets have announced two advents ‘of Christ;’—one, in which he should be made subject to stripes, and be taught to bear infirmity, should sit on the foal of an ass, should be the stone rejected by the builders, and should be led as a lamb to the slaughter; and when, by the extending of his hands, dissolving Amalek, gathering the dispersed children from the ends of the earth into the fold of the Father, remembering also his dead that had before fallen asleep, and descending unto them, he should deliver them and save us;—a second, in which he will come in the clouds, bringing that “day which shall burn as an oven,” “smiting the earth with the word of his mouth, and with the Spirit of his lips slaying the wicked,” &c. &c †

* In reference to 1 Cor. ii. 15.

† Irenæus adversus Hæreses, lib. iv. cap. 56.

It will be useful to bear in mind, as we proceed, what notions of Messiah and of his kingdom prevailed in the minds of men, both Jews and disciples, during all this period of our Lord's intercourse among them. The former, from his very humiliation and affliction, concluded he was not the Messiah; the latter, though taught of God that Jesus was, indeed, "He that should come into the world," yet could not reconcile the actual circumstances of their Master, with the expectations, they had imbibed from Scripture prophecies respecting his reign upon earth; and, therefore, were evidently watching for some change in his person and in his operations. They followed him in his humiliation; but with the expectation that he would, ere long, throw off his assumed disguise, and appear as the Son of God and as the King of Israel. Their hope was not formed in vain: though it came not to pass in the manner, and at the time, that they at first imagined.

SECTION II.

Nathaniel's Confession.

IN the next passage that comes to be considered, Nathaniel's acknowledgment of Jesus,* how plainly do we discover the notions mentioned above, to have been those of the convinced disciple! and in our Lord's reply to him, how plain is the reference to that distant period, when, whatever he might witness in the intermediate

* John, i. 45, &c.

season, the believer's expectations would not be disappointed! Nathaniel, convinced by what had fallen from our Lord in his address to him, that he was "the Searcher of hearts," that BEING — though he saw him habited as man — who seeth in secret, concludes immediately that it can be none other than that incarnation of the Deity, which the ancient Scriptures taught him to expect in the person of the Messiah. He exclaims,—

"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

Our Lord's answer implies a commendation of his faith,—that he was not offended at his poor and lowly appearance, which, in the eyes of his countrymen, would appear so incompatible with the predicted glories of Israel's manifested Elohim and King. He assures him that in due time his faith should realize its expectations in the heavenly vision of his manifested glory : —

"Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith to him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Such was the state, in which, they might reasonably expect, from the ancient prophecies, the GOD-MAN would appear; and his believing followers, who were not offended in him — contemplating him at the season of his humiliation — should hereafter behold his glory. Our Lord's introduction of this declaration, by his double asseveration "verily," "verily," marks, in a peculiar manner, the great importance, as well as the certainty of the event foretold.

SECTION III.

Some Expressions in the Sermon on the Mount, and in our Lord's Prayer.

A REFERENCE, also, to our Lord's second advent, and to his kingdom, at that time to be manifested on earth, we may discover in the opening of his sermon on the mount:—

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,”—“blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

“Poverty of spirit” and “meekness,” so nearly allied to each other, are evidently characteristic of the same renewed minds—fruits of the same regenerating spirit. How those, who are thus manifested to be children of God, may be said to have ‘the kingdom of heaven,’ without a necessary reference to the events of the second advent, it were not difficult to show; because the spiritual privileges of the Gospel church are a first-fruits and an anticipation of the privileges of the future kingdom, and are sometimes called by its name. But how the same persons can be said, in present circumstances, to ‘inherit the earth,’ it is impossible to conceive, or to reconcile the declaration with the general style of Scripture. The followers of the Lamb are there described to be “pilgrims and strangers upon earth,” not having their good things now, but sorrowing while the world rejoices: at most, in the intervals of persecution, “holpen with a little help.” Knowing, however, as we do, from the ancient prophecies, that the Messiah is to come again to reign upon that earth, which had been the scene of his former humiliation, we

naturally refer the promise to that period; especially as we know that “the saints of the Most High” are, with HIM, at that time, “to take the kingdom under the whole heavens.”* Agreeably with this, we read, in Hannah’s prophecy, concerning the exaltation of the afflicted Saviour and of his people:—

He raiseth up from the dust a poor, exhausted ‘one,’
 He exalteth from the ashes one most destitute:
 That he may be seated with ‘his’ princes;
 Ay, a glorious throne he causeth them to inherit.

The passage before us will still more remind us of a prediction in the thirty-seventh psalm:—

7. For evil doers shall be cut off,
 And they that wait upon Jehovah shall inherit the earth.
 Yet a little while, and the WICKED ONE is not;
 Ay, thou shalt notice his place, but he is no more:
 And then shall the meek inherit the earth,
 And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Again; when our Lord, in another part of this discourse,† says, “Swear not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; neither by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the GREAT KING;”—who can forbear to conclude, that he has before his eyes the future destinies of Jerusalem? according to what we have read in the former prophets of the Old Testament:‡ for at the period when our Lord delivered his discourse, Jerusalem could not be called “the city of the GREAT KING.”

* Daniel.

† Matt. v. 33.

‡ Psalms xlvi.; lxviii.; lxxvi.; cx.; Isaiah, lx.; Joel, iii. 17; Jer. xxx. 23, and xxxi. 38; Ezek. xxxiv. &c. &c.

When we consider, too, the circumstances under which our Lord dictated *his prayer* to his disciples, the petitions, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," must have seemed, in their views and expectations of the promised kingdom, and of its happy consequences to mankind, to embrace the prospect of Messiah's personal reign on earth. So they would understand the clause; such would be the meaning of the petition from their lips; and such would have been its meaning on the lips of all Christians, had they not, in these latter ages, so strangely forgotten the promise of their Lord's coming, and lost sight of the expectation of that happy day, when

"A King shall reign in righteousness," &c.*

For certainly the prayer of the petition is not granted till "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ."

That such was the view which our reformers took of this petition of the Lord's prayer, has been already pointed out by Dr. Hales, from King Edward's Catechism. "*Scholer*: In the second part we require that '*Hys kingdom come*,' for we see not '*all things in subjection to CHRIST*,' (Psalm cx. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xv. 25—27; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 8.) We see not *the stone hewed off from the mountayne without work of man*, which also bruised and brought to nought the image which Daniel descryeth, (ii. 34—41,) that the onely Rock, CHRIST, may *obtain* and possess the dominion of the whole world, graunted hym of his Father, (Dan. vii. 13—27; 1 Cor. x. 4; Mat. xvi. 18.) *Antichrist is not yet slayne*, (Dan. vii. 10; 2 Thess. ii. 8—10;

* Isaiah, xxxii. 1.

Rev. xix. 20) “ For thys caus do we *long for* and *praye* that it may at length *come to pass*, and that CHRIST *may reign with his saintes*, according to God’s promises, (Rev. xx. 4, &c.) that he may *lyve* and *LORDE* in the world, accordynge to the decrees of the HOLY GOSPEL, (Phil. ii. 11; Rom. xiv. 8, 9; Rev. xix. 6, &c.) not after the *tradition* and *laws of men*, nor pleasure of *worldly tyrant*. Master. God graunt hys kingdome may come, and that spedilye! (Rev. xxii. 20.)”

But since the time of our early reformers, a growing distaste seems to have prevailed among us for the literal interpretation of the reign of Christ upon earth; and some modern expositors have even began to treat this interpretation as extravagant and absurd: — “ Cum antistitibus agamus, ut quidvis potius ex illis libris, quàm regem proferant.”¹

SECTION IV.

The Close of the Parable of the Tares, Matt. xiii. 40.

WE next barely notice the conclusion in the explanation of the parable of the tares.

“ The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

¹ Cicero de Divinatione, lib. ii.

To the same effect, at the conclusion of the parable of the great net, ver. 47—50.

The “severing of the wicked from among the just,” in Christ’s professed and visible church, the casting of the former into the fire of hell, while the remainder are exalted to everlasting glory, has ever been represented, in the prophetic Scriptures which we have reviewed, as part of the business of the second advent; and this not after a long period of Christ’s reign upon earth, but in order to its commencement. This is particularly to be observed, and is fully ascertained by the following Scriptures. This earth is to witness the “reign of righteousness,”* and to be “covered with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.”† It is to see a time, “when the wicked have been turned into hell, and all the nations that have forgotten God.”‡

Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh inexorable,
Even indignation and burning wrath;
To make the earth a desolation,
And to cast her sinners out of her. ||

So in Amos, when the final felicity of Israel is foretold, § “The eyes of Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth,” &c.—“All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword:” but this is at the eve of their expected felicity,—“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David, which is fallen,”—“And I will plant them in their own land, and they shall no more be plucked up,” &c. See also especially the close of the prophecy of Malachi.

* Isaiah, xxxii. † Chap. xi. 9. ‡ Psalm ix.

|| Isaiah, xiii. 9. § Chap. ix.

The expression, “so shall it be in the end of the world,” may, perhaps, at first lead us to suppose that the destruction of this material fabric is intended; but the term we render “world” in this place, applies properly to *duration*. It implies the whole and entire duration of any system or dispensation. Thus in this, and in many other passages, “this world” denotes the duration of the present dispensations of grace and providence, contrasted with a future dispensation which is to commence with “the manifestation of the sons of God” at the resurrection of the just. That is called “the world to come.”¹ “To come,” as it should seem, with respect to the inhabitants of the earth: for Jesus, at his resurrection, is said to be brought into that “world.” “When he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the

¹ “Mihi singula loca diligenter excutienti persuasissimum est, in formula αἰῶν οὗτος (Judæi הַיָּמִים הַזֵּה vocant) tantum describi *presentem rerum humanarum in his terris statum et conditionem*. Hoc enim certissimè evincitur locis omnibus, in quibus hæc formulâ reperitur, v. c. Matt. xiii. 40, οὕτως ἔσται οὖν ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου.— Luke, xx. 34, οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. 1 Cor. iii. 18; Ephes. i. 21; Tit. ii. 12; ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι. E contrario αἰῶν ὁ μέλλων (f. ἐκεῖνος, f. ἐρχομενος), vel *futuram omnium hominum post resurrectionem conditionem* in universum (quam etiam Judæi עוֹלָם הַבָּא appellabant), vel speciatim *futuram Christianorum in cælis felicitatem* significat. Hanc

in rem maximè notabiles sunt loci, Matt. xii. 32, οὐτὲ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι, οὐτὲ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι.—Mark, x. 30, καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζῶνι αἰῶνιον, Luc. xviii. 30; ib. xx. 35; οἱ καταξιώθεντες τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐκείνου τυχεῖν, Ephes. i. 21; Heb. vi. 5; δυνάμεις τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. E quibus locis satis apparet nunquam in N. T. *mundum hunc* tempora V. T. et *mundum futurum* tempora Messiae significare, quæ fuit olim plerorumque sententia,” &c.—SCHLEUSNER.

But the fact was, by the “era of Messiah,” the ancient Jews did not designate the temporary events of a first advent, but, losing sight of this, they speak of the glorious manifestation of Messiah’s kingdom. This was their עוֹלָם הַבָּא.

angels of God worship him :” * so that we may say, “ the world to come,” spoken of in Scripture, is already begun in the heavenly places, but is yet “ to come” with respect to its manifestation here below : for it is one day to come down and to supplant the present system and dispensation of things in this lower world. This is what is frequently in Scripture meant by “ the end of this world,” and also by the symbol of “ a new heaven and a new earth.” However the material frame of the universe may, or may not, be affected by the change, it is the political, the moral, the religious world that is often principally in view : and it is plain, from what we have already read, that “ the world to come of which we speak” is manifested on earth before the fabric of the earth is entirely destroyed, or the children of Adam altogether cease to exist upon it in flesh and blood : so that Messiah’s reign, though upon this present earth, should be reckoned, not as part of ‘ this world,’ but of ‘ the world to come.’ This is plain from Psalm the seventy-second, and the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

SECTION V.

The Transfiguration.

THE conversation which our Lord held with his disciples previously to his transfiguration, and that remarkable event itself, will fall next under our consideration.

Mark, viii. 34.—“ And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them,”—Luke, “ All,”

* Heb. i. 6.

—“ Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself,” and “ take up his cross”—Luke, “ daily,”—“ and follow me.” Luke, ix. 24. “ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake,”—Mark, “ and the Gospel’s,”—“ the same shall save it,”—Matt. “ find it.” Matt. xvi. 26.—“ For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”—Luke, “ lose himself, or be cast away,”—“ or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark, viii. 38.—“ Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh”—Luke, “ in his own glory and”—“ in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.” Matt. xvi. 27.—“ For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works.”

We have here an evident distinction between “ Christ’s own glory” and “ the glory of his Father.” He comes in his own glory; he comes in his Father’s glory too. “ His own glory,” I agree with Dr. Macknight, “ is the glory peculiar to him as God-man—the majesty and splendour of his glorified body, a visible representation of which he exhibited in the transfiguration, about a week after this discourse was delivered.” This was the glory everlastingly ordained to him as the Meritorious Man,—the glory which God gives to him, and which *he* gives to his brethren of mankind. Our Lord is said, moreover, to “ come in his Father’s glory” when he appears surrounded with divine majesty, as the delegated Messenger of the Father. It is one thing to manifest himself as the Head of his church and the Lord of creation; another, as the Representative of ABSOLUTE DEITY. As the Representative of ABSOLUTE DEITY, he appears in the character of Judge; in his Father’s name, inflicting vengeance on the wicked, or vindicating the righteous, whether

at the time of his appearing and kingdom, or at the general resurrection of *all* the unblessed dead. At the first, he gathers out of his kingdom all that offend and do iniquity among men then on earth: and,—as we were led to suppose from former Scriptures,* —some notorious persecutors of his church are then also summoned from the dead to meet their everlasting doom. All these he will judge according to their works, and he will judge the rest of the dead—not included in the first and blessed resurrection—according to their works, and as their “work shall be”—in regard to the operation of his glorious Gospel—will he divide his flock that shall be on earth at the time of his appearing, when he ascends the throne of his kingdom. So his *choice* will be *made manifest*: for we must ever bear in mind “He hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own purpose, and the grace which was given us in Christ before the world began.”

When he is said to “appear in his own glory,” it respects his manifestation in the midst of his redeemed people, as the King of saints, the “Leader of his happy followers,” who are partakers of his crown and of his glory. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” He is unquestionably manifested in both characters at his second coming, and the glories of each character surround him in the midst of angels and of glorified men. In his first character, as he is the “brightness of the Father’s glory,” and “the express image of his person,”—“God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,”—THE

* Isaiah, xxvi. 21; Dan. xii. ii.

MANIFESTATION OF DEITY — THE VOICE HEARD OF THE INVISIBLE MIND — THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED :” in this character, no creature, holy angel, or soul of just man made perfect, can partake of his splendour and glory — nothing can be similar or like to this ; but in his second character, as he appears in his own glories as sovereign Lord of creation and Redeemer of men — when, if we may so speak, he throws his glorified humanity, as an outward vesture, over the more resplendent robes of the Divine Majesty — of this glory, though not holy angels, yet the redeemed from among men are to be partakers. They are “ conformed to his image,” and “ made like unto the only begotten Son of God ” — “ their bodies ” “ fashioned like unto his glorious body ;” and in this glorious state they come with him, and are manifested as “ the sons of God,” when he appears with his holy angels, to execute judgment and justice upon the earth.

It was on the occasion we are considering, that the blessed Jesus said to his listening disciples, Matt. xvi. 28.

“ Verily, I say to you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,” — Luke, “ till they see the kingdom of God,” Mark, “ come with power.”

This language seems to intimate that the favour of seeing the Son of Man coming in his kingdom, before they should die, was a favour destined for some particular persons, and not for all, or for the generality of his disciples ; and thus the event explained his meaning to have been, —

Luke, ix. 28. — “ And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings,” — Matt., Mark, “ in current time, after six

days,"—" he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain,"—Mark, " an high mountain, apart by themselves—to pray." Luke, ix. 29.—" And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening,"—Mark, " and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them."—Matthew says, chap. xvii. 2. " And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."

We have here, no doubt, the different words of the three spectators, as each would describe, to his fellow-disciples, the impression which the glorious vision had made upon his senses. Their divine Master, whom they had been accustomed to contemplate as a fellow mortal " in flesh and blood," and, as the prophetic Spirit had described him, disfigured with grief and sorrow: " His countenance so marred more than any man, and his form than the sons of men:" they saw him transformed on a sudden into the glorious appearance described above. In which description the spectators evidently labour for words and for comparisons, taken from things seen on earth, to convey their ideas. This was a vision of the GOD-MAN; the glory in which he will appear in his kingdom; it is " his own glory," not " his Father's glory." No attributes of vengeance and of judgment are here symbolized in the Redeemer's person. A voice from the highest heaven acknowledges " the beloved Son." It is not " the glory of the holy angels;" he appears not attended by angels; but two spirits of just men made perfect, Moses and Elias, appear with him " in glory," and they are heard to discourse together of " his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem:"—

Mark, ix. 4.—" And there appeared unto them Elias with

Moses, and they talked with him." Luke ix. 30. — " And behold, there talked with Jesus two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they were awake they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him : " And "— Luke, " it came to pass as they departed from him "— " Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what he said, for they were sore afraid."

" Peter fancied, no doubt," observes Dr. Macknight, " that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity," " and that the kingdom was at length begun. Wherefore, in the first hurry of his thoughts, he proposed to provide some accommodation for Jesus and his august assistants," &c.

" While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them,"— Luke, " and they feared as they entered into the cloud,"— " and, behold, a voice came out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, be not afraid : "— Mark, " And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."

Thus was fulfilled his previous assurance to his disciples, that some of them should not taste of death till they had seen him coming in his kingdom. That the apostles understood this as an exhibition of Christ coming in his kingdom, is clear from St. Peter's observations in his Second Epistle : * " For we have not followed cun-

* Chap. i. 16.

ningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the *power and coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty: for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory,—This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.” And it is remarkable that St. Peter connects with this vision the general object of prophecy, for he continues: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.”

I subjoin Dr. Macknight’s observation:—“The glory with which our Lord’s body was adorned in the transfiguration, exhibited a specimen of the beauty and perfection of the glorified bodies of the saints after their resurrection. This the apostle intimates, Phil. iii. 21, ‘Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself,’” &c.

SECTION VI.

Some Passages in Luke, xii., xiii., and xviii.

IN our Lord’s improvement of the parable of the rich glutton, Luke xii., we have intimations of the promised kingdom, which we may not altogether pass over. He had said, “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom:” * and having, from

* Ver. 32.

the prospect of their future happiness, dissuaded them from worldly care and ambition, he proceeds : —

35. “ Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily, I say to you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them; and if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so doing, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

“ The coming of the Son of Man,” in this passage, is clearly the second advent; and the metaphor of the thief choosing the most unexpected time, that he may come unperceived upon his spoil, is often, in subsequent Scriptures, employed to impress us with an idea of the suddenness and of the unexpected season of the Lord’s appearing. On this is grounded the duty of constant watchfulness. The church on earth is to be like a family sitting up at night to wait their master’s return from a public feast: and we shall often remark, that in view of the Saviour’s appearing, the church, as a body, and not the individual, is addressed. The church is considered as one and the same body, a corporation that never dies; and though her individual members die, and are replaced, still, from age to age, it is the same house and the same family, waiting their Lord’s return. This will be found the common style of these anticipations of the second advent. Generation after generation have died, ‘ not

having received the promise' of his coming; but they watched and waited not in vain. He discharged them, individually, from their watch, and took them to himself, to wait nearer his presence, where they contemplate, in the paradise above, the glory that is to be revealed in the last day. For this glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour they waited and watched upon earth amid toil and sorrow; but it came not in their day, while they stood in their ward; yet they kept their Lord's command, and watched: and now they wait to come with him when the happy day arrives, and they shall receive their resurrection bodies.

Peter, ever the spokesman of his brethren, inquires whether this particular exhortation, to "watch with loins girded and lights burning," like servants sitting up for their master, was intended for them, "the apostles and ministers of the word," alone, or for others also; and our Lord's reply clearly declares, that, though what he said to them he said to all, yet that certainly it concerned, in an especial manner, his apostles and ministers! And on this he grounds a particular exhortation to his ministers, as such—an exhortation which, as on the one hand it clearly shows their awful responsibility, and the dreadful punishment which will ensue to the unbelieving minister; so, on the other hand, it clearly shows the divine institution of the Christian ministry, as a distinct order from the people, and describes their authority and office to be of a nature that may be abused to purposes of tyranny and oppression over their fellow servants, and is not, therefore, an office which their fellow servants may control or dispense with, make or unmake, at their pleasure, according to some modern notions of church government and of the Christian ministry.

42. " And the Lord said, Who, then, is that faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth, I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with unbelievers."

We have a reference also to the final settlement of the Redeemer's kingdom:—

CHAPTER XIII.

" Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall strive to enter in, and shall not be able: When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God; and, behold, there are last that shall be first, and there are first that shall be last."

We must not, also, entirely pass over the inference our Lord draws from the parable of the importunate widow and unjust judge:—

CHAPTER XVIII.

6. "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith, and shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily"—or, "suddenly." "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

This corroborates many ancient oracles, that the day of God's vengeance on the enemies of his people is the day of the Messiah's coming. The passage leads also to a suspicion, that the belief and concurrent expectation of the Saviour's coming will, in the latter days, be reduced very low.

SECTION VII.

The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and of the Pounds.

I PERCEIVE, by the Harmony, that the passage next in order, which touches upon the concerns of the second advent, is the declaration of our Lord to Peter, when he had said, in the name of himself and his brethren, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Matt. xix. 28.

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Expositors differ in their application of the term regeneration; some connecting it with the present fol-

lowing of Christ and his cause, while he is regenerating the souls of his people ; others, with his sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, when he shall “ make all things new.” The latter sense I conceive to be most analogous to the general style of Scripture, and it appears to me to be a phrase exactly parallel to one afterwards used by St. Peter :— “ Whom the heavens must receive until *the restitution of all things.*”

A similar reasoning forbids us to accept the exposition of some, that all here promised refers to the dispensation of the Gospel by the risen Saviour, through the instrumentality of his inspired apostles, as the chief officers of his kingdom, to those of the circumcision at least. Because the Redeemer’s sitting at God’s right hand in heaven, while the Holy Ghost the Comforter acts personally as his substitute in his church below, is never in Scripture represented as coeval with his sitting as Judge and King on the throne of his kingdom. This always refers to the period of his returning from heaven at the second advent.

What will be the nature of the subordinate rule of the twelve apostles, and of what description its peculiar relation to the twelve tribes, I presume not to explain ; but the simple fact of this rule, and the relation of this rule to the tribes of Israel, seems to be clearly revealed ; and we shall afterwards meet with intimations bearing upon the same subject.

I shall only remark, that the parable of the labourers in the vineyard—receiving each their penny—being found in this connexion, leads to its application, not to the church in general, but to the peculiar servants of the great Shepherd, who have “ left all and followed him,” or who have laboured in the cause of the Gospel.

Certain of them are represented as having endured toils and labours very disproportioned to the services of some others, and, as naturally supposing, according to their human — we may say, worldly — conceptions, that they were entitled to a proportional reward above the others. These prophetic parables, we shall remark, are often intended to meet the *present* feelings and conceptions of the minds to be instructed. They do not discover what *will* be their real feelings when, as glorified spirits, they receive the reward of the kingdom; but what *are* their feelings and conceptions in the present misinformed state of their minds, and which need to be exposed and censured.

This parable is evidently meant to reply to Peter's somewhat too boastful claim, for himself and his fellow-apostles, of the sacrifice of their all at their Master's call. Our Lord's reply had said, that they should have an exceeding great reward. But the parable seems to say, the other labourers will receive an equal reward, although some of them will not have made such sacrifices, nor have endured such toils, as you my first followers: and in your present views, if you could see the future method of rewarding the labourers in my vineyard, your carnal and envious hearts would rise against your employer; seeing others, who have done so little, whose labours in the ministry, and sufferings for Christ's cause, seem, in the eye of men, to have been so small, rewarded "even as you." This is clearly the spirit of the parable. Peter will have no such "evil eye" on his generous Master's proceedings when, as a glorified spirit, he is called to receive the particular reward for his ministerial labours, at the time that the chief Shepherd shall take account of his servants; but this carnal thought was then in Peter's

mind, and needed to be reprovèd; and it is written for our admonition.

The parable, therefore, intimates a particular remuneration of the services of Christ's ministers. We may suppose, from the thrones mentioned above, that this remuneration is a superior rule or charge in the future kingdom of the Messiah. The parable certainly seems to say their remuneration shall be alike. The master engages to give a penny to his first labourers, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and he fulfils his engagement: but he is also pleased to give to all the rest, of his bounty, without respect to their different proportion of labour, even "to those who had wrought but one hour," the very same sum that he had engaged to give to the first. Does not this say, that Peter and his fellows, whose sacrifices in Christ's cause are pleaded before him, shall sit on thrones, for this he has promised them; but so shall also the other *labourers*, even those that have done but little, and suffered but little?

Such strikes me as being the meaning of the parable; and the expression, "but the first shall be last and the last first," I understand to be proverbial; — there shall be an equality, the first as the last, and the last as the first.

"Many called and few chosen," must, I fear, be applied to the awful circumstance, that, of the great number of persons, in the different ages of the church, who are outwardly called to discharge the sacred functions of the ministry, but few will be acknowledged as the real labourers of Christ in the work of the Gospel.

But, though something particular in the glorifying of the labourers is specified — perhaps relating to their particular employments in governing the nations upon

earth,—I would keep steadily in view, that all the members of Christ are heirs of the kingdom, are joint heirs with Christ; all shall wear a crown; all shall sit with the Redeemer upon his throne, and participate in his rule and kingdom: so that the distinction between those symbolized by the labourers and those symbolized by the vineyard, is not in any essential possession of glory, or of regal dignity, or in any different measure of participation in the Redeemer's likeness: "He is the first-born among many brethren;" all "are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the only begotten Son of God." But official employments, perhaps, may create a difference—at least during the reign upon earth—even among equal brethren; and, it may be, the crowned elders, and the cherubim around the throne of the Lamb, are meant to symbolize these distinctions. Could we fully understand the mysteries of the kingdom, we, no doubt, could reconcile the positive declaration of this parable, that all the labourers in the vineyard have the *same* reward, and yet he who had gained ten talents be seen to reign, as it were, over ten cities, when another had but five committed to his charge. The differences are somehow lost in the greatness of the universal glory; and every part of God's word will find its true explanation in the event.

This parable of the ten pounds is what comes next to be considered.

11. "He added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." *

* Luke, xix.

They expected such a kingdom, as to its eternal grandeur and universal rule, as the Scriptures had predicted; and they expected, according to prophecy, that Jerusalem would be the seat of this kingdom. This we discover very plainly from the cry of the multitude when Jesus actually entered the city:—"And those that went before, and they that followed after, cried, saying, Hosannah! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Blessed be the approaching kingdom of our father David!"*

To obviate this expectation of the immediate appearance of the predicted kingdom, and to prepare the minds of his followers for the state of things which was actually to follow in the intermediate space, our Lord speaks this parable:—

"He said, therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

Their situation, with respect to the kingdom of Messiah, which they expected, might be compared to the circumstance of one of their great men, who, by descent or otherwise, was become heir to the throne of his country, but who, in order to his receiving the regal authority, must, in the present circumstances of the world, leave his country, the seat of his future reign, and journey to a far distant country, even to imperial Rome, who alone could dispose of crowns. So the child born to the house of David, though mature in years to receive the kingdom, would not now take possession, but depart from earth to heaven, and having received of his Father the investiture of the promised kingdom, would return again at the

* Mark, xi. 9.—Vide GRIESBACH.

season appointed. In the meantime, his immediate servants must not think of reigning, but of serving in his absence : —

13. “ And he called his ten servants, and delivered to them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.”

A plain description of the state of things upon earth, and among that nation in particular, during the interval between the two advents. His servants, instead of participating in the honours of a kingdom, must live and serve in a world hostile to their Master and to them : —

“ And it came to pass, that when he returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds : and he said to him, Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds ; and he said likewise to him, Be thou also ruler over five cities.”

This certainly seems to say, that in proportion to the faithful application of their gifts and talents, in the church below, the servants of Christ will be put in trust with offices and authority in the future kingdom. The parable, so interpreted, appears, indeed, to hold a different language from the parable of the labourers, where each receives a penny, notwithstanding their very disproportionate labours !

That parable was spoken to check in the minds of the first disciples, an undue appreciation of the personal and

temporal sacrifices that they, in their hard times, were obliged to make, in order to discharge their office. It told them, that, however ill prepared their minds, in their present state, were to receive such a statement, there would be those who had not gone through such toils, nor had wrought such labours as they had, who would receive the same remuneration with themselves,—with that which had been stipulated to them,—to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. We may, therefore, infer, that the increase represented by the “gain of the pounds,” is something different from the sacrifices and hard service of a primitive Christian minister, contrasted with the comparative light and easy burden which, in these respects, Christ’s servants have been called to bear in subsequent ages of his church. But the parable may well suggest a question,—Are there endowments or trusts of a particular kind, bestowed on Christ’s servants here, the due improvement of which will fit them for more extensive services than others, in the kingdom which is to come?

This seems countenanced by a circumstance we shall notice below, where the pound taken from the slothful servant is directed to be given to him that had ten pounds—the pound itself, with which he should have traded upon earth—not the reward in the kingdom, which might have been represented as prepared for him had he been faithful—but the pound itself.

After all, we do not, perhaps, know enough of the heavenly qualities of those that shall reign with Christ on earth, and of the nature of that authority they are to exercise, to be able to see the harmonizing principle that renders the equal “penny,” and the unequal number of cities, alike true, as symbols of that blessed state, and of

the services of those who serve the heavenly King. It was said, too, we shall recollect, respecting every faithful steward, that when his Lord comes, he would truly make him ruler over *all* that he hath: so that there must be, in the exceeding great reward that awaits all, an excellency of glory that, in some points of view, reduces the difference to nothing,—that *perfect* unity, perhaps, we should say, among the members of Christ, that the honours bestowed on one are the honours of all.

“ And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin, for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he said, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; wherefore, then, gavest thou not my money to the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said to them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. And they said to him, Lord, he hath ten pounds! For I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.”

We may reflect on this part of the parable, that since the pound symbolizes something that a wicked man may possess — or rather, be intrusted with — the thing signified can be no fruit of the regenerating, sanctifying Spirit of grace. It may be personal talent; it may be ministerial trust; it may be wealth, or power, or influence, or natural abilities; but what is commonly called grace, it cannot be. Mark the thoughts of the slothful servant, as they are turned out to view by the Searcher of all hearts;

mark his impressions of his lord's character! Had he obtained mercy? Had he ever tasted that the Lord was gracious? Did he know the gift of God? No: if it be any thing more than an idle excuse for sloth—the picture is that of the rigid moralist, who is, or pretends to be, so scrupulous, so exact, he will not even do good, lest, perchance, evil should spring. But the character here described stands so confessed in the outward professing church, among those who hold some portion of their *Lord's goods*, that we cannot but understand what is meant; and how fearful is the account that many a minister, and ruler, and man of talent—the different “stewards of the manifold gifts of God”—must one day give to their Lord!

I would lastly observe, that the enemies to be slain are evidently the apostates of the Christian church at the time of the Redeemer's coming, of whose destruction we have read so much in former prophecies. It cannot be applied here, as some commentators suggest, to the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth: for the trust of Christ's servants had not then expired; nor was that the season of rewarding the faithful; nor could that, in Scripture language, be called the return of Christ in the character of King.

SECTION VIII.

Our Lord's Confutation of the Sadducees.

WE next are called to remark on some expressions of our Lord, in his confutation of the Sadducees.*

* Matt. xvii. 23; Mark, xii. 18; Luke, xx. 27.

“ The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead,”—Mark, “ when they shall rise from the dead,”—“ neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels,”—Matt. “ but are as the angels of God in heaven,”—“ and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

In this passage, we have the distinction, noticed before, between “ this world ” and “ that world .” “ This world ” is the present period and dispensation of grace and providence: “ that world ” refers to that new order of things which goes forth at the resurrection of the just, or is then, at least, developed on this earth. “ The children of this world ,” we remark, are not contrasted with “ the *children* of that world ;” but with those *who are counted worthy to obtain*—obtain that world as their lot and inheritance, and who are, at the same time, partakers of the resurrection “ The *children* of this world ” are men and women in the flesh; and such, if we have rightly understood the former prophecies, “ will be the *children* of that world .” But, besides the nations upon earth, “ there will be the saints of the MOST HIGH ,” who, with the King of saints, are to take the kingdom and rule over these nations. “ The promise to Abraham and to his seed ” is “ that he should be HEIR of the world .” Again; we have read, “ the meek shall inherit the earth .”

These are the objects of our Saviour’s animadversions in the passage before us. Those who obtain the inheritance, and reign with Christ upon earth; they are “ incorruptible;” the relations of mortality affect them no longer; they are, in these respects, what angels are: nay more, they, “ being the children of the resurrection,”

—that is, evidently, of the resurrection of the just, as distinguished from the general resurrection,—“they are the children of God;” not merely by creation, as angels may be so called, but by adoption, and transformation into the image of God’s only begotten Son, unto whom, as glorified man, “he has put in subjection the world to come.”

SECTION IX.

Our Lord’s direct Prophecies respecting his Second Coming.

WE now come to our Lord’s express prophecies respecting the subject of our inquiry, which will demand a larger share of our attention. Our blessed Saviour, after having denounced the approaching vengeance of God upon the nation of the Jews, was heard most pathetically to exclaim,—

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, * till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”†

Here we are to mark two distinct predictions; one of the dissolution of the temple; “the holy and beautiful house where their fathers served God,” and in which our Lord was then addressing them, was to be laid in ruins: another, of his coming again, when that people, who now

* *Ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ.*

† Matt. xxiii. 37.

rejected him, should gladly welcome him as their God and King. This is clearly implied in the declaration that they should see him no more until they should say "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, therefore, is a very distinct thing from the coming of Christ. If we keep this in view, we shall find no great difficulty in understanding the following prophecies.

Our gracious Saviour, as we have observed, had uttered these predictions while he was with his disciples in the temple.* As he was departing from the sacred building, his disciples called his attention to its magnificence, seeming to say, must all this, the pride and boast of Israel, be indeed destroyed? His answer was:—

"Seest thou these great buildings? Verily, I say to you, the days will come, in the which"—"there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down!"

They were proceeding on their way to the Mount of Olives: when they had arrived there, and were seated on its summit, with the temple full in their view, and all the holy city lying at their feet, four of his disciples came to him privately, "saying,"—

"But, Master, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming,¹ and of the end of the world?"²

The subjects of their inquiry are two: 1. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; 2. The coming of Christ, ever connected in their view with the "end of the world:" for the words "when shall these things be?" will

* Matt. xxiv.; Mark, xiii.; Luke, xxi.

¹ Τῆς σῆς παρουσίας, ² Ζυγτελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

naturally be applied to the destruction of the temple, of which they had just heard to their amazement: but, distinct from this, they make it an object of inquiry,—“What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” They meant evidently by his coming, the coming of which he had spoken in the temple, when Israel would see him again and salute him with blessings. By “the world,” it is reasonable to suppose they meant what was usually understood to be the import of that term, as applied to the Messiah’s coming. By this world, they would mean the present period and dispensation of religion: at the end of this period, when Messiah came, they expected a new “world” to commence; a new period and dispensation of things. Such has been the import of the term ‘world’ in passages we have already considered; and “the world to come” was a term constantly applied, by the Jewish writers, to the times of the Messiah; not to the period of his humiliation, indeed, for of that they had lost sight, but to the season of his glorious reign, which had engrossed all their attention.

We may view, therefore, the prophecy before us very much in the nature of those Old Testament prophecies respecting the coming of Christ and erection of his kingdom, which, together with their grand object, embrace, or occasionally glance at, some nearer object of immediate importance to the church. Thus, in Isaiah’s prophecies, the inroad of Assyria, the Babylonian captivity and restoration, and the afflictive scenes of the first advent, came occasionally in our view, while still the future glorious kingdom was the main theme of the prophecy; and our great business was to distinguish where the prophetic vision passed from one subject to another. So, in the prophecies before us, the second coming of

Christ, and the signs of that coming, are the principal subject; but the more immediate destruction of the city and temple, and dispersion of the Jewish nation by the Romans, comes also occasionally in view, and will require carefully to be distinguished from the main subject.

It will be useful here, before we proceed, to review a former prophecy of our Lord, delivered some time previously to the Pharisees, and which I have reserved to this place, as likely to afford an illustration of the one before us. In that prophecy, if I may so speak, the destruction of Jerusalem is not mixed up with the prediction of Christ's coming and kingdom, and yet we see the same general outline traced, as in the prophecy before us. That prophecy, therefore, we will first consider:—

“ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say lo here, or lo there, for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you,”—or, “ in the midst of you.”

I confess, after all that has been written in explanation of this passage, some difficulty remains. I cannot think, with Dr. Macknight, Christ meant to correct the mistaken notions of the Pharisees respecting the nature of the Messiah's kingdom,—that it was “ not to consist of an outward form of government, to be erected in that particular country:” because we do not know, that, in their conception of the grand outline of the predicted kingdom, they were mistaken; and, notwithstanding what Dr. Campbell has said in his note, I cannot conceive, that, speaking of his kingdom, as the development of a holy

* Luke, xvii. 20.

and vital principle in the hearts of men, he would say to the Pharisees, when he is addressing them as *distinct* from his disciples, "the kingdom of God is within you." The translation of "among you," Dr. Campbell has very properly discountenanced.

I incline to a much more simple interpretation of the passage. The Pharisees mean to ask concerning the glorious kingdom of Messiah, and our Lord, in his answer, meets their question. This glorious kingdom "cometh not with observation;" does not so arise that men can observe and notice its approach, and mark or watch its progress. "It is within you," or "in the midst of you," manifested to the very soul of man: not observed coming by the common exercise of human vision, that sees first at a distance, and then traces the nearer approach of the object, so that the finger can point out "lo here" or "lo there:" but, like the electric darting of the lightning, it is every where in a moment. The wicked it takes unawares, as a thief in the night; it comes upon them as pangs upon a woman with child, and they cannot escape. With respect to the just, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," they are changed. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." "The dead in Christ first rise, then we that are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

This I conceive to be the meaning of our Lord's words, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" it cometh not so that you can observe its approach; "it is in the midst of you," in a moment, bursting upon you from on high.

What our Divine Instructor immediately says to his

disciples, seems to me to convey the same notions of the day of his coming :

22. " And he said unto his disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it."

Plainly intimating, that the time of his appearing was a season, for which his church would long have to wait, and often would their anxious desires to see its commencement be disappointed. During this " long tarrying," also, greatly would they be harassed by impostors and deceivers, who would raise erroneous expectations of the coming of the Redeemer's kingdom. Our Lord cautions his disciples respecting this :—

23. " And they shall say to you, See here, or see there : go not after them, nor follow them : for as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under the heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day."

The flash of lightning, filling in an instant the whole horizon with light, bursting, in the same moment, into the midst of ten thousand assemblies, is the emblem here given us of the manifestation of the Son of Man to his church. His appearance will be sudden : it will be present to all ; " all flesh will see together the glory of Jehovah." Whenever, therefore, we find men pointing to this event, or that event, as a fulfilment of the prophecy of " the coming of Christ," we need not examine their reasonings or go after them. " The coming of Christ" will be an event manifested before the eyes of all : it will not be an object of inquiry or of communication one to another :—a sufficient argument that when one advances an opinion, that the coming of Christ

means the destruction of Jerusalem; and another, that it means the successful propagation of Christianity, we ought not, for one moment, to listen to them, or suffer our attention to be diverted from the grander expectation which the words of prophecy have created in the waiting people of God. "The Son of Man" will be that "in his day" which will admit of no doubt or disputation.

Our Lord, however, forewarns his disciples, that these things are not yet: a different scene must be first unfolded before their eyes:—

25. "But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

He next proceeds to describe the unexpected manner in which the day of his coming will burst upon a careless world:—

26. "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded: but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

The destruction of apostate, guilty nations with fire from heaven, we shall remember, is constantly declared in the ancient prophecies,* to be a concomitant of the Redeemer's appearing in the last day: his people,

* Psalms xi. 6; xxi. 9; Isaiah, xxx. 27, 28; xxxiii. 10, &c.; xxxiv. 8, 9, 10; lxvi. 15, 16; Ezekiel, xxxix. 6; Dan. vii. 9, 10, 11.

therefore, that shall be in the midst of the cities and countries devoted to destruction, in order that they may not be partakers of their plagues, will be delivered, as Lot was out of Sodom.

The suddenness of their deliverance is again expressed, probably in proverbial expressions :—

31. “In that day,”—in the day when the Son of Man is revealed, as is expressed in the foregoing verse,—“in that day, he that shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. 32. Remember Lot’s wife.”

This is a picture of the sudden surprisal of a city ready to be taken by storm, to part of whose inhabitants a moment of deliverance is afforded: but so sudden is the rescue, that not a thought can be bestowed on any earthly possession; that moment must they leave or perish. The hankering of Lot’s wife after something she had left in Sodom, that caused her to cast a lingering look on the city she had left, is urged as an example. This must refer to the suddenness of the deliverance of God’s people from the midst of ungodly nations in the great day: for it is expressly said to be “the day in which the Son of Man is revealed.” What might be literally true of certain scenes in the besieging of Jerusalem by the Romans, and in the besieging of many other towns by their enemies, in which some have a moment, and but a moment, afforded for their escape, is here used metaphorically of the escape of some righteous persons, who shall be in the midst of the mystic city, then to be destroyed by fire from heaven. It follows :—

33. “Whosoever shall seek his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.”

As applied to the catastrophe in view, these words may be considered as true in the strictest, most literal sense. He who, in those trying scenes, shall endeavour to save his life, or the enjoyments of life, at the expense of his confession of my name, shall lose that life in the common destruction of his people; but he who has actually lost his life for my sake, and the Gospel, shall preserve it; because the resurrection of the just will be at that very hour: so that even with regard to this present lower world, at the season of Christ's second advent, the martyr lives and the apostate dies.

34. "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left."

It is the interference of the deliverance, not the infliction of the judgment, that is here described. From the whole structure of the context, he that escapes from the devoted city, is saved; he that remains in it, perishes. He that is taken away is delivered from the wrath to come; he that is left behind is the victim whom the judgment overtakes. This passage, therefore, tells us, that when God shall send to gather out his elect from those parts of the world that are doomed to be destroyed, his call will separate between the closest friends, between persons engaged at the moment at the same appointed household task, or engaged together in the same agricultural labours: and this employment in field-labour is certainly against the supposition that the surprisal of Jerusalem is intended. There is room, also, for the gloss, that the manifestation of deliverance is made to some in

the dead of night; to others, during the labours of the day. This, it is obvious, would be the case “in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” He comes not with observation—he stands confessed on a sudden in the midst of his waiting people, under the whole heavens—and the angels sent to summon to his immediate presence, and to deliver them as Lot from the destruction of Sodom, will not wait the slow progress of the sun, but will penetrate, at the same instant, the confines of light and darkness on the face of the terraqueous globe:—

37. “And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither shall the eagles be gathered together.”

This is nothing more than a proverbial expression. Wherever the guilty victim shall be found, there shall the messengers of divine vengeance find it out. To suppose an allusion to the standards of the Roman army, were perfectly gratuitous, even if the destruction of Jerusalem by that people were the object of the prophecy, which it is not

In entering now upon the larger prophecy which our Lord uttered, in reply to the question of his disciples, “*When shall these things be?*” and “*what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*”—we must keep carefully in view this shorter prophecy, occasioned, as we have seen, by the demand of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come. There can be no doubt that each prophecy embraces the same grand object, “the power and coming” of the Messiah, to establish that glorious kingdom which the disciples, as well as the Pharisees, fully expected.

Luke, xxi. 8.—“ And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ,”—Matt., Mark, “ and shall deceive many;”—“ and the time draweth near: go ye not, therefore, after them.”

I understand these words as a general and leading caution to the church of Christ, in all ages, waiting his second coming. Her great danger would be deceivers, usurping the office—by implication, if not professedly—of the only Mediator between God and man. “ The time draweth near ” may admit of two expositions: the time is near at hand when you, my disciples, will be exercised with this temptation: or they may mean, the abounding of these successful seducers will be a very conspicuous sign of my appearing; and to this agree the words of subsequent prophecies.

Another afflictive circumstance, which would long exercise the patience of his waiting people, and, in its extreme prevalence towards the last, serve as a sign of his appearing, was the circumstance of great wars and tumults breaking out among the nations of the earth,—those nations especially which were professedly the people of God.

9. “ But when ye hear of wars and commotions,”—Matt Mark, “ wars and rumours of wars,”—“ be not terrified, for all these things must first come to pass. But the end is not by and by.”

That is, “ the end ” of the world, for this was part of the disciples’ question: “ What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ? ” The answer is, generally, “ The appearance of evil seducers,—and the prevalence of wars.”

Our Lord’s discourse next prepares them for the ap-

proaching desolation of Jerusalem, which he calls "the beginning of sorrows:"—

Luke, xxi. "Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven; all these are the beginning of sorrows."

Bishop Newton, in his Dissertation on the Prophecies, has very ably collected together the historical evidence of the fulfilment of these predictions previously to the desolation of Jerusalem; and we may justly remark, if these are but "the beginning of sorrows,"¹—as the words strictly signify, the first of the pains of a labouring woman—what are we to expect at the time of the end, when the world shall experience those dreadful throes that are to complete her labour?

12. "But before all these things, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, and deliver you up to the synagogues,"—Mark, "councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten,"—"and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name sake."—Mark, xiii. 9, "But take heed to yourselves."—Luke, xxi. 13, "And it shall turn to you for a testimony"—Mark, "against them."—Mark, xiii. 10, "And the Gospel must first be published among all nations."

A clear prediction of the general preaching of the apostles in the Gentile world, previously to this beginning of sorrows, the desolation of Jerusalem.

11. "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do

¹ "Ἀρχὴν ὀδύνης, Ὀδὴν properly signifies the pain of child-bearing, which at the beginning is but light, in comparison of what it becomes afterwards."—DR. MAC-KNIGHT.

ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." — Luke xxi. 14, "Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate before, what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist: and ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolk and friends, and some of you they shall cause to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men," — Matt. "of all nations for my name sake." — Matt. xxiv. 10, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and many false prophets shall arise and deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved;" — Luke, "but there shall not a hair of your head perish." — "And the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come."

This address to his disciples respecting the persecution they are to expect from mankind, is not to be confined to the times previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. It is a glance at the whole history of persecutions to the end of the present dispensation, when the kingdom of God shall come. Their persecution by their own countrymen, in the synagogue, is first clearly marked, and, connected with this persecution, the promulgation of the Gospel in the Gentile nations: but, after that, they are to be persecuted and hated by "*all nations*." They are, moreover, to suffer great corruptions in their own body, through deceivers and traitors, and the gradual decay of Christian principles. But some will "endure to the end," that is, "the end of the world," for that being the meaning of "end" in the disciples' question, it ought to have the same meaning in our Lord's answer. But before, perhaps immediately before, this end shall come,

even in the midst of these times of deceit, and treachery, and decay of Christian love, in respect to the church in general, there shall be a still wider diffusion of the Gospel in all the world—to all nations. An extended general proclamation of the Gospel, with whatever success, to all the nations of the earth, is another “sign of Christ’s appearing, and of the end of the world,” that is, of the present dispensation of grace and providence.

We now come to our Lord’s more particular predictions respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which we must be careful to keep distinct from the general theme of his prophecy, “his appearing and kingdom:”—

Matt. xxiv. 15, “When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, whoso readeth let him understand.”—Luke, xxi. 20, “And when ye see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them that are in the midst of it, depart out; and let not them which are in the countries, enter thereinto.”—Matt. xxiv. 17, “Let him which is on the house-top not come down,”—Mark, “not go down into the house, neither enter therein,”—“to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.”—Luke, xxi. 22, “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled.” Matt. xxiv. 9, “And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in winter, neither on the sabbath day.”

In this place, we must be careful not to pass unnoticed a sudden transition, in the copies of the discourse preserved by St. Matthew* and St. Mark,† from the

* Ver. 21.

† Ver. 19.

“beginning of sorrows,” in Jerusalem’s destruction, to the greater troubles of the last days. In St. Luke, the transition is not so sudden: there, the intermediate space and the history of Israel during the long interval, is plainly marked. After having, with the other two evangelists, reported our Lord’s words, “But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days,” *his* report continues:—

“For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

In connexion with the *fulfilling* of this period of the treading down of the holy city by the Gentiles, our Lord says, according to St. Luke:—

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Such is St. Luke’s report of our Lord’s discourse, who, by the current opinion of antiquity, is stated to have written from the mouth of St. Peter, one of the four disciples who had put the question privately to Jesus: “When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” St. Luke’s report has clearly, and in order, stated the answer to

these questions, both with respect to the desolation of Jerusalem, and its long continuance in a state of desolation, and also with respect to the second coming of Christ, after the period of that desolation should be completed. When, therefore, we read in the report which St. Mark makes of the same discourse : —

“ For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved ; but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.”

Or to the same effect in St. Matthew’s copy : —

21. “ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be ; and except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

When we read these most awful declarations, it is surely absurd to apply them to “ the *beginning* of sorrows” — the desolation of Jerusalem by the Roman armies — when St. Luke’s report has plainly marked more signal afflictions in connexion with the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles in treading down the holy city, immediately previous to ‘ the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven.’ None can doubt that the troubles of the last days are comparatively greater than the affliction, dreadful as it was, of the siege of Jerusalem. The words of Mark and Matthew express and mark a time of trouble, such as not only never was before, but never should be again ; and to this agree the words of all the prophets respecting the last perilous times. Those of Daniel are express to the point : — “ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy

people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time shall thy people be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”* And this illustrates the following words in St. Luke:—“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”†

It was in connexion with these last troubles that our Lord again more particularly intimates the appearance of impostors and false prophets to be a prognostication of the near approach of his kingdom:—

Mark, xiii. 21, “And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, there, believe him not.”—Matt. xxiv. 24. “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Mark, xiii. 23, “But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all things.”—Matt. xxiv. 26, “Wherefore if they say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not: for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For,” or “moreover, wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.”

A plain repetition of his former predictions, on occasion of the Pharisees demanding of him “when the kingdom of God should come.”

The ancient prophecies have prepared us to expect that the issue of the last conflict of the nations, which is the cause of the unprecedented afflictions of the last times, will be the entire prostration of all human power

* Chap. xii. 1.

† Ver. 28.

and authority, and of all the divine institutions in church and state, as prostituted and abused by sinful men. The language of prophecy predicted this by "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars."* Our Lord here uses the same symbols to predict the same events:—

Mark, xiii. 24. "But in those days, after that tribulation,"—Matt. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days,"—"the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

And this great political revolution, we have ever seen, is immediately preparatory to the appearing of the King Messiah in his glory.

We have already copied St. Luke's report:—

"And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."—So St. Matthew, xxiv. 30. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

The ancient prophecies† have also told us, that all his saints shall be collected to him on this occasion, and come with him when he cometh as "the Lord from heaven." So in the prediction before us, Matt. xxiv. 31.

"And then shall he send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four

* Isaiah, xiii. 3, &c.; xxiv. 19, &c.; xxx. 26; xxxiv. 4; I. 2, 3; lxvi.; Joel, ii. 30, &c.; iii. 15; Dan. ii. 34, &c.; vii.; Haggai, ii. 6, 7, 22, 23.

† Jude, 14; Psalm lxviii. 17; Isaiah, xxv. 7; xxvi. 19; Dan. vii. 22; Micah, ii. 13; Haggai, ii. 7.

winds, from one end of heaven to the other,"—Mark, "from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven."

All this most certainly is coeval with what is predicted in a passage quoted above from Daniel: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince that standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that same time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book"—the book of God's election—"the Lamb's book of life:" and as, in Daniel, the resurrection is immediately mentioned, we may conclude that the gathering of the elect is universal, including "them that sleep in Jesus," as well as those that are "alive, and remain unto the coming of our Lord."

There immediately follows, in our Lord's discourse, the interesting parable of the figtree, designed to awaken all who love his appearing, to watch for these signs of its approach, Matt. xxiv. 32:—

"Now learn a parable of the figtree,"—Luke, "and all the trees:"—"when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know,"—Luke, "of your ownselves,"—"that summer is near. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors:"—Luke, "Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

There can be no doubt that the kingdom of God, in this connexion, means the erection of the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, so much the theme of prophecy, and which we know at this time so exclusively occupied the thoughts and expectations both of the disciples of Christ and of the Pharisees. "When shall this kingdom come," and what shall be its signs, was the question of

the Pharisees on a former occasion, and of the disciples on this; and the answer on both occasions, is, The coming is after particular corruptions of the professed church, through religious impostors, and after unprecedented wars, and tumults, and revolutions, among the kingdoms of the earth. As surely as the swelling bud indicates the approach of summer, shall these signs indicate the coming of the Son of Man in his kingdom. These wars and desolations cannot mean the destruction of Jerusalem, nor the kingdom predicted to follow the reign of Gospel-grace among the various nations of the civilized world; as well because of what has been already advanced to dissuade from that error of many commentators, as from this circumstance, that, in fact, the erection of the kingdom of grace, whether we date its commencement at the epocha of the resurrection or at the day of Pentecost, did not *follow* the desolation of Jerusalem, and the overthrow of the Jewish state, but preceded it several years. But the wars and tumults here spoken of are to be signs and prognostications of the approaching kingdom, and not its consequences or concomitants.

Indeed, these predictions would never have been understood of the siege of Jerusalem, and fall of the Jewish state, but for a misunderstanding of the meaning of a term in the following verse:—

Matt. xxiv. 34. “ Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

The word rendered “ generation ” does not necessarily refer to the coexistence of the same race of men; it also

means a family or nation, deriving their origin from one common stock.¹

And again; the word rendered "pass away" does not necessarily mean the lapse of time: for in this very passage it is used for the *extinction* of the heavens, and for the *failure* of a word spoken. This verse, therefore, may signify, and, from the context, perhaps, must signify, that this race or family of Abraham shall not become extinct, or fail in the procreation of its posterity, till all these things shall be fulfilled: it shall survive as a nation, and be found in the destined circumstances when the Son of Man shall be revealed.*

Indeed, what follows bespeaks something of far more importance than the destruction of Jerusalem: —

"But of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son; but the Father only."

The Son himself knoweth it not: that is to say, "He had it not in commission to make it known to his people." In "the mystery of the Father and of the Son," while the Son acts in the subordinate character of the Messenger of God — the Prophet of his people, his omniscience is not put forth, no more than his almighty power; he is

¹ See Schleusner in *γεννα*, — "proles, posteritas, omnes qui ex communi quadam stirpe origines ducunt, familia, natio, gens, cognati," &c. This was Mr. Mede's interpretation. Bishop Horsley

thought *all these things* might refer to the leading question, "When shall *these things* be?" — the destruction of the temple. &c., as distinguished from "What shall be the sign of thy coming," &c.

* Compare Isaiah, lxxv. 8, 9.

content to be found weak, and he is content to grow in knowledge, and to wait, as other prophets, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Hence he says, "The Son can do nothing but what he seeth the Father do." So can he make known nothing, but as the Father maketh it known: and hence a subsequent revelation is entitled "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass."

That this unrevealed secret, for power to manifest which the Son himself was waiting, did not relate to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to any thing else but to the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed in his glory, is plain from the conversation which took place between our Lord and his disciples after his resurrection.* "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power." Observe, it is not the destruction of Jerusalem; it is not the preaching of the Gospel among the heathen; it is the restoring again the kingdom to Israel, that is the object uppermost in the thoughts of the disciples! This is ever represented in prophecy as a consequence of Messiah's coming. This, therefore, the greatest of all events, is that, "the times and seasons of which the Father hath put in his own power."

Our Lord proceeds, on the occasion before us, in his reply to the four disciples on the Mount of Olives, to hold the same language which he had previously held, when

* Acts, i. 6.

he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, Matt. xxiv. 37 : —

“ But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left: two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one taken and the other left.”

An exhortation also to watchfulness, very similar to what had been given before, immediately follows, and none can doubt that it refers not to the sudden affliction that should overwhelm Jerusalem, but to the great day of the Lord : —

Matt. xxiv. 42. “ Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” — Mark, xiii. 33. “ Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a long journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping: and what I say unto you I say unto all, watch.”

The words in St. Luke are equally emphatic : —

Chap. xxi. 34. “ And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunken-

ness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

It appears, too, from St. Matthew's report, that the parable instructing the steward to watch, was repeated by our Lord on this occasion:—

Chap. xxiv. 45. "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

In the former conversation, it was "appoint him his portion with the unbelievers"—adjudge him to be an unbeliever. "A steward of the mysteries of God," a "minister of the word," who is an unbeliever, while he ministers in his office, cannot but be a hypocrite in the discharge of all his sacred functions!

The twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, containing the parables of the ten virgins, of the talents, and of the shepherd dividing his sheep from his goats, comes next to be considered.

This chapter, be it remembered, is a continuation of the same discourse of our Lord which he delivered sitting on the Mount of Olives, to the four disciples who had

come unto him privately to demand what would be the signs of his coming and of the end of the world,—that is, the end of the present order and dispensation of grace and providence, which, it was known, was one day to give place to the times of the Messiah, when a new order of things would take place, which, in the language of the Jews, and of the Scriptures themselves, was called “the world to come.”

The meaning of these three parables has been much misconceived for want of attending to this circumstance—that they are parts of the prophecy respecting the signs of Christ's coming and of the end of the world.

Matt. xxv. 1. “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”

At the time referred to in the prophecy — “in the day when the Son of Man is revealed”—the coming of his kingdom, in regard to his waiting family upon earth, may be thus compared. It may be compared to a party of the relations of a new married couple, who are gone forth in the evening with their lamps, to meet the bridegroom bringing home his bride in the accustomed manner. To the careless world—to the apostates, who “will not have this man to reign over them”—the kingdom of God may be likened to the coming of a thief in the night; but these virgins represent the professed people of God, the household of waiting servants. They are apprized that their Lord is coming; they know not the hour, but they have a sufficient intimation to cause them to prepare for the occasion.

Of these virgins, however, that represent the professing church, and affect to be waiting for their Lord, nay, trim their lamps and go out to meet him, prepared,

as it should seem, to receive him with due congratulations, as about to appear to their joy and salvation; of these ten virgins, a moiety is inconsiderate, and know not what they mean.

“ And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.”

The wisdom or the folly was seen in this :—

“ They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

The lamp clearly indicates a disposition to honour the bridegroom at his coming, as one of his friends, as one “ that loves his appearing.” This, in the circumstances supposed, when the church had received intimation that the coming of the Lord was near at hand, would be the profession of all. Every professor, at the time referred to, will take his lamp; but not all upon a real, and true, and fixed principle of faith in the approaching Saviour. This appears illustrated in the sequel of the parable :—

“ And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.”

The representation is, he does not come quite so soon as expected; the whole party had been roused, and went forth animated with the expectation of soon seeing the bridegroom: but there occurs a delay, which tries their patience. The expectation is not kept up by repeated renewals of the indication of his approach; so that, as might happen through the infirmity of nature in servants waiting for their master, “ all slumbered and slept.” This, there is little doubt, is intended for a true historic picture of the church in the last days. The

church will have an indication of Christ's coming, and the attention and expectation of all will be roused; but the trial of character and patience will be, a seeming delay:—

“ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him! Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps; and the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves: and while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, lord, open to us: but he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.”

The persons symbolized by the foolish virgins evidently assume the character of those “ that wait for their Lord;” but they are not thoroughly furnished for the occasion. After all their profession, notwithstanding they go in company with the wise, they are found unprepared at last, and are excluded from the society of the blessed. A deficiency in heart and principle is clearly pointed out in the lamp that shines, but has not wherewith to feed the flame, should continuance and perseverance be required. We may illustrate this from “ the stony ground” and the ground uncleared from thorns, which, in the parable of the sower, receives the seed of the word. This deficiency is represented as discovered, by the day of the Lord coming and finding them not ready; and if the professing church continues that same mixed society which it is at present, how many will it overtake un-

prepared, unready! Not exactly “as a thief in the night;” but still after every warning, and after every affected preparation, unready, and off their guard at the decisive moment!

The analogy between the case of the individual as overtaken by the hour of death, and this of the professing world, whom the day of the Son of Man surprises, is so strict and exactly similar, that the parable may very properly and usefully be accommodated to exhort to watchfulness against the hour of death; since that hour is seen to come upon many, who had begun a profession of religion, and had been warned of its approach, in a state totally unprepared, and without “those things that accompany salvation.” But the primary design of the prophetic parable is certainly to represent the state of the church in the latter days, and to impress upon its members the exhortation before delivered: “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”*

The second parable, that of the talents, though differing a little in its imagery, is evidently to the same purport and effect as the parable of the pounds, before considered:—

“For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants¹ and delivered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his several abilities; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and

* Luke, xxi. 34.

¹ ἰδίους δούλους, “his own slaves.”—MACKNIGHT.

made them other five talents; and likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them: and so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He, also, that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents, behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received one talent came and said, Lord, I know thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath five talents: for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

I refer to the observations offered on the parable of the pounds. The general purport of the two parables is the same. It regards the ministers and stewards of the manifold gifts of God: they are called "the Lord's own servants," or "his household slaves:" they are put in trust with some things to manage for his interest — with

their Lord's goods; and in this parable, as in that of the pounds, it is represented as something that may be taken from one, at the great day, and given to another, to his honour and advantage. This, I think, strongly argues, that by pounds and talents are intended that official character, or those especial endowments and gifts, which enable a man, not "to make his own calling and election sure," as a private Christian and member of Christ, but which enable him to promote the public interest of Christ upon earth. Indeed, the term talents, from its use in this parable, seems to have acquired in our language some such meaning.

The chief difference in these two parables is, the equal pound as committed to all the servants in the former, and the unequal talents in the one now before us. Perhaps our divine Instructor, in the one, had the general trust of the ministry in view, which, as to its essentials, is alike in every minister of God's word; and in the other, the different gifts and qualifications with which his servants, for special purposes, are seen to be endowed. The circumstance, that our Lord should choose to represent the unfaithful servant as the least gifted, and as put in the least trust, certainly is not designed to teach that unfaithfulness is not sometimes found among the greatest of his servants, and among those whose spheres of usefulness might have been the greatest. This erroneous interpretation is corrected by matter of fact. But our Lord's design may be, to caution his servant against a fault, and a very dangerous temptation, but too common to man,—that because they have but little that they can do, think it not worth their while to do any thing, while they flatter themselves, perhaps, that had they been intrusted with

more, their diligence would have been as conspicuous as that of others.

We now come to the parable of the shepherd dividing his flock. If the last parable concerned the ministers and stewards of the Lord's household, this certainly concerns every member of the family; for brotherly love, effective in deed, and not existing in word only, is essential to the character of every Christian, let his station and situation be what it may. And as faithlessness to ministerial trust in the shepherds that feed the flock, is decisive of character in the one case; so, in the other, to be destitute of this charity is equally decisive that a man is not one of the sheep of Christ; and this the great day will publicly declare in the face of the whole world.

“ When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth his sheep from his goats ; and he shall set the sheep at his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say to them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an

hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Whatever be the allowable accommodation of this parable to the examination of individual character, its primary intent is to illustrate the proceedings of the King Messiah, with respect to his professing people, when he shall appear upon earth. One great business of the second advent, as we have learnt from former prophecies, is Christ's judgment of his people. This he executes, not only by vindicating them in their destined and promised rights, but in separating from among them all the wicked and unsound members. This has been represented already by various images. "He shall be as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap, and he shall sit as a refiner of silver," &c. "His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor; his wheat will be gathered into his garner, but his chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Compare also the close of the parable of "the tares," and of that of "the great net cast into the sea." This refers not to the general judgment, when ALL the dead shall stand before the tribunal of Christ. It is intended to represent what will take place at the appearing of the Son of Man, "when he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom." The general judgment could not be represented as forming its decision on *one* trait of

character alone — love to Christ, effective in charity to his members. Since the general judgment is a judgment “according to works,” each is to receive according to that which he hath done, whether it be good, or whether it be bad. Thousands and ten thousands that will be summoned to that tribunal never knew the Lord Jesus, nor were called to show kindness to his brethren — to “disciples in the name of a disciple!” This, therefore, cannot mean the general judgment, and it will be found hereafter, that this general judgment does not take place, nor the general resurrection of the dead, at the commencement of Messiah’s reign upon earth, when he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, but after a thousand years.

Again, we should remark, that though all nations are said to be gathered, yet they are spoken of as being before all mingled together—up to that very time, though essentially different in their nature, as goats from sheep, they were all feeding promiscuously together. One point of the comparison is, “As a shepherd *separateth* his sheep from his goats, so shall the King *separate* them one from another.” Hence it follows, that the church found on the earth at the time of the Saviour’s appearing, in “every nation under heaven,” is the flock intended as the object of this judgment. Thus we read in the parable of the tares, “the field is the world.”

It extends not to the dead: the sheep among them that slept had long ago been placed at the King’s right hand, or, at least, had been separated from the goats, and were in Abraham’s bosom—in the resting-place of the spirits of the just: they come with Christ on this occasion, appearing with him in glory. The goats also, whom, as individuals, death had cut off from the professed church, were “gone to their own place:” they

have no part in this resurrection; with "the rest of the dead" they "live not as yet." The flock, therefore, now separated, is the same as the field, where the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest; the same as the great net, including of all kinds, which the fishers drag on shore, and select the good from the bad.

The parable before us teaches us this, that the separation which will then take place among the professed believers in the Gospel, who are all supposed to have the form of godliness, will coincide with the genuine influence of Christian love; and could you discern God's discrimination of his own, now, amidst his undivided flock, you would see this to be the constant concomitant of the divine choice; his people are "taught of him to love one another." By consequence, this affords the criterion of individual character, as far as characters are evidenced, in the sight of men here upon earth. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."—"By this we know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion on him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

The inference from this, as it concerns all the waiting family of Christ, is evident: it ascertains beyond doubt the eternal rejection of every professed Christian, in whose heart this love is not shed abroad: it ascertains that all who do love are the sheep of Christ, "the righteous" or "justified," "the elect of God, whom he hath chosen before the foundations of the world were laid"—"chosen in Christ unto salvation:" it ascertains that all who love Christ, and love him when manifested in his people, are heirs of the kingdom, and shall reign with Christ in glory.

SECTION XI.

Remarks on Matt. xxvi. 29; Luke, xx. 28; Matt. xxvi. 64.

IN addition to these direct and more copious prophecies respecting the coming of Christ in his kingdom, I cannot but call the reader to remark the language of our blessed Master, when he had instituted his sacramental supper :

Matt. xxvi. 29. " But I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine,"— Mark, " I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine,"—" until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom,"— Mark, " till I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

I conceive Christ, after his resurrection, could not be said to partake with his people in their spiritual enjoyments, which they tasted through the Spirit. This, therefore, I conclude, must refer to the unknown and altogether new enjoyments of God's good creatures, which glorified spirits will have in the world to come, when they drink of the river of pleasures that is at God's right hand for ever.¹

¹ Irenæus plainly refers the fulfilment of this text to the time of the resurrection of the just—" quando regnabunt justi surgentes a mortuis,"— and he quotes, as parallel with it, Psalm civ. 30, " Thou renewest the face of the earth;" the promise, Luke xiv. 12, 13, " Thou shalt be rewarded at

the resurrection of the just;" the hundred fold reward, Mark, v. 5; and even the blessing which Isaac gives to Jacob, Gen. xxvii.: and he states this as the interpretation given by certain presbyters who had seen John, the disciple of our Lord, and affirmed they had heard it from him. He refers also to

Of the same kind I consider our Lord's promise to his disciples:—

Luke, xxii. 28. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

— Earthly things are employed as metaphors and symbols: a king's royal entertainment of his favoured friends,—the gift of thrones and sceptres. Heavenly realities are certainly signified, but, at the same time, these realities must, in some sort, correspond to their signs.

I have but one passage more to quote from the evangelists: it is the declaration of the blessed Jesus when adjured by the high priest, the true application of which the passages already considered will have afforded.

Matt. xxvi. 64. "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

— Surely a spiritual Israelite would, and will still exclaim, "Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that at thy presence the mountains might melt away, as when the fire is kindled in the wasting stubble—as the waters which the fire hath made to boil; to make known thy name to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!"

Isaiah, xi. 6, 7, 8, 9, and to fore, we may certainly challenge
lxv. 25, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb," &c. The Scripture which appears to some
oldest tradition of antiquity, there- so novel.

SECTION XII.

Remarks on some Passages in the First, Second, and Third Chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

WE are told, in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, that our blessed Lord, during the “ forty days ” between his resurrection and ascension, when he occasionally appeared to his disciples, “ spake of the things concerning the kingdom of God.” We may, however, fairly conclude, that nothing had transpired in these his last instructions, to alter, in the minds of his followers, those views of the final establishment of the kingdom of Messiah—to reign at Jerusalem and unto the end of the earth—which, with all the Jews, they had received from the perusal of the Old Testament: for “ when they were come together,” to witness his ascension,—

“ They asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom unto Israel ? ”

This question takes for granted that such an event was to happen. They question their divine Master, not as to the fact, but as to the time. His answer, too, admits the justness of their expectations, but checks their inquiries as to the period:—

“ It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”

The appointment of the kingdom to our Lord and Saviour is ever considered as the gift of the Father, to

reward the merits of his only begotten Son, become the Son of Man, and destined to share the glory thus acquired with all his brethren, "the children whom God hath given him." He, therefore, represents himself as waiting, at the head of his adopted family, the Father's pleasure concerning the kingdom, while, as their great Mediator, he offers up the prayers of his people for its coming.

It belongs to our subject, also, to notice the declaration of the angels, at the time of the Redeemer's ascension:—

"While they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight: and while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, — which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

These celestial visitants evidently speak to the disciples as representatives of the church of God upon earth. They themselves, as individuals in the flesh, would not see him come again on the earth, — they would "die, not having received the promise;" but the church is still to keep up the expectation of her Redeemer's coming — of his personal appearance in the clouds of heaven, as the ancient prophets and himself had said.

Compare with this St. Peter's address to the Jews after the day of Pentecost:—

"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come,"—

or, "that they may come,"¹—"from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you,"—or, "who was before appointed, or designated, or pointed out to you,"²—"whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which"—or, "concerning which"—"God hath spoken, by the mouth of his holy prophets, since the world began."

"The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," I believe to relate to those glorious seasons which the Scriptures allow us to expect when Israel shall turn to the Lord: the apostle speaks, all will allow, of Jesus Christ being sent again to Israel. "*Until the restitution of all things;*" a remarkable expression to designate the wonders of the second advent! Till this epocha the heavens must receive him. "The Son of Man is as a man journeying into a far country, and to return." So that our Lord Jesus Christ is now personally absent from the earth; but at the time of "the restitution of all things," he is to return upon earth, and to be personally present here, as he was personally present previously to his ascension, "when the heavens received him:" and these things, "the restitution of all things"—"the coming of the Lord from heaven," the apostle tells us, has been the constant theme of every prophet since the world began; and so, in truth, in this our inquiry concerning the prophecies of the second advent, we have found it.

¹ See Doddridge's note.

² Acts, iii. 20. "Τον προεχρησμενον, (ita enim edidit Griesbachius loco προεχρησμενον, quod est in plerisque editionibus,) υμιν Ιησου Χριστου, quem vobis ab eterno desti-

naverat Jesum Christum.

"Alii vertunt, Jesum Christum, quem vobis jam olim per prophetas prädixerat et notum fecerat," &c.
—SCHLEUSNER.

CHAPTER II.

THE APOSTOLICAL EPISTLES.

IN pursuing the object of our inquiry through the apostolical Epistles, I shall generally observe the same chronological order which we have observed in consulting the former oracles of God, and take the Epistles according to their known or supposed dates.

In this view, the first and second Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians will first demand our attention:—the Epistle to the Galatians containing nothing specific respecting the second advent, except that it distinguishes “the Jerusalem that is above,” the “mother of all true believers,” from “the Jerusalem that now is;” which distinction we have already quoted in illustration of former prophecies, and to which we may again have to refer.

SECTION I.

The last Part of the Fourth Chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

IN the fourth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians, we have one of the most express revelations of the second advent any where found in the oracles of God:—

13. “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as

others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

As surely as Christ has died, and is risen again, that he might be the Lord both of the quick and of the dead, so surely shall God bring with him — with the great Redeemer when he returns again on the earth, those that sleep in him: the believing dead, who — as to their bodies, sleep in the dust of the earth — as to their spirits, rest in Paradise, waiting, in incipient happiness and undisturbed repose, the coming of the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep."

The apostle says this by express revelation and command of Christ. We notice in this place, again, the peculiar style which the Scripture very generally uses concerning the second advent. It views the church as one and the same waiting family, commanded to watch in constant expectation of its Master's return. Many members of this family, it is true, will die, and be numbered with those that sleep in Jesus, ere the coming of the Lord draws near; but *they* are equally interested in the approach of that day with the living members of the church that shall then exist on earth: nay, those that are alive and remain to the coming of our Lord will not "prevent," "anticipate," or "be beforehand with," those that are asleep — God will bring them with Christ. It even appears, from what follows, that *they* anticipate rather, in the glorious resurrection, those that are on earth: —

16. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

Observe, nothing is said of the wicked dead. If some of them also, at this epocha, arise from the dust of the earth,—as appears from Daniel, chap. xii. 2,—the Holy Spirit, in this place, confines his revelation to the dead in Christ, the emphatic "children of the resurrection," according to our Lord's expression.

17. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—Or, "Then, together with them, we shall be snatched away¹ in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord."

We remark here, that the dead are described as rising from the earth, and joining their living brethren, ere they are caught up to meet their triumphant Saviour. Their bodies, we know, were sleeping in the dust of the earth. This were enough to account for the phraseology here employed. The relation of height is not expressed in the original; but it certainly is the usual style of Scripture, to speak of the separate spirits of the just as tenanted also that abode of the dead, which is described generally as beneath, or under the earth, with respect to its surface. Thither, in his lamentation over him, Jacob thought he should go down to his son Joseph. The spirit of Samuel, that, by divine permission, appears to Saul, uses this remarkable language, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" Who can inform us that it was in accom-

¹ Ἀρπάζομεθα.

modation to vulgar errors, that our Lord described the situation of the happy Lazarus, though he lay in Abraham's bosom, as afar off indeed, but still as placed in the same regions with that abode of the wretched where the rich man lift up his eyes? "Far above," indeed, was the resting place of the spirits of the just, but not out of sight. So, at least, our Lord — before whose eyes hell and destruction were exposed to view — has chosen to represent it, and his description must be substantially true. It was not in heaven that Jesus, on the day of his crucifixion, went to fulfil his promise to the penitent thief, that he should be with him in Paradise: he descended into hell, and rose not to the surface of the earth till the third day had dawned thereon; nor, till forty days had run their courses, did he ascend from its surface to distant worlds above — to the heaven of heavens, to sit at the right hand of God. "Now, he that ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things?" *

Compare with this the following oracles already considered: —

"God rideth on amid myriads;
A Leader of happy followers is the Lord among them;
Sinai is in the sanctuary:

Thou didst ascend on high,
Thou leddest captivity captive." †

"And he shall penetrate in this mountain,
The face of the covering cast over all peoples,
And the veil that is spread over all nations;
He shall penetrate death unto victory." ‡

* Ephes. iv. 9, 10.

† Psalm lxviii.

‡ Isaiah, xxv.

“ Thy dead shall live, their dead bodies shall rise :
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.

For thy covering shall be as the dew of the morning,
And the earth shall drop the deceased from her womb.” *

“ A buzz from a multitude of men !
He that forceth a passage is gone up before them !

They have forced a passage, and have passed through the
gate, and are gone forth by it,
And their King passeth before them, even Jehovah, at their
head.” †

“ And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall
awake,” &c. ‡

The risen dead, and those of the same redeemed family that are alive and remain,—they having been, in a moment, changed, as another Scripture will inform us, into glorified spirits,—are caught away together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. They meet him beyond the clouds, before his feet stand again upon the earth ; and this explains those many Scriptures that represent the saints as being with the great Redeemer when he comes again on the earth. Such, it appears from this Scripture, will be the fact : for they are summoned, whether from earth or from Paradise, to meet their Lord in the air, and are ever to be with him : so that when he is revealed in flaming fire to the unbelieving world, they are “ with him in glory.” Hence we see the fulfilment of the most ancient oracle : “ Behold, the Lord cometh with his holy myriads to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

* Isaiah, xxvi.

† Micah, ii.

‡ Daniel, xii. 2.

The apostle continues, ver. 18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." This revelation was to be the source of their comfort respecting their departed brethren, whose untimely end, perhaps, they were bewailing. This was to be the topic of consolation in their exhortations to one another, in every afflictive circumstance of their pilgrimage.

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you."*

The last words of their Master had forbade them to expect that a revelation would then, or perhaps ever, be made of the exact time when this great event should come to pass. It would certainly take the *world* unawares, as Christ had himself said:—

"For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night: for when they shall say,"—or, "shall be saying,"—"Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

However, as we have seen in former prophecies, the people of God would not be *altogether* unapprized of the coming of their Master: if they know not the day nor the hour, yet they will have some intimation of its near approach:—

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober: for they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let

* Chap. v. 1.

us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and, for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

SECTION II.

2 Thess. i. and ii. with 1 Tim. iv. and 2 Tim. iii.

IN the first chapter of the second epistle to the same church,* adverting to the persecutions and tribulations that they had endured, the apostle observes, "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." Your suffering in his cause is an evidence that God will give you the kingdom,—he would not let you suffer for him, had he not a rich recompense in store.

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

—"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance." What light does this throw on former prophecies!

"He shall rain upon the wicked lightning, fire, and sulphur."†—"Thou putttest them in a furnace of

* Ver. 4, &c.

† Psalm xi. 6.

fire, at the time of thine appearing."* — "Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."† — "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion; and the streams thereof [of the spiritual Edom] shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched day nor night; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever."‡ — "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh," &c.|| Compare also the vision respecting the "Ancient of Days," in Daniel: "His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels burning fire: a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him," &c. — "The body" of the fourth beast is "destroyed and given to the burning flame."

Here, too, we remark again the same style ever used in Scripture respecting this great day, when the Son of Man is revealed. It addresses the church as a society that is to remain till that day arrives, and in that day alone is she, as a body, to expect the redress of all her wrongs. But we have already seen how every individual member of the church, in every age, will be equally interested in the events of that day: because all the elect of God, "whether they sleep or wake, will live together with Christ," and be among the "holy myriads" that come in that day with the Lord from heaven. The passage before us, moreover, speaks of those who trouble the

* Psalm xxi. 9.

† Isaiah, xxiv. 6.

‡ Isaiah, xxxiv. 8, &c.

|| Isaiah, lxvi. 15.

church, as if, in a body, they must also await in that day the vengeance of the great Redeemer: at least, the language will bear this construction; and prophecies already considered have led us to the conclusion, that, perhaps, the notorious persecutors of the people of God may be summoned from their graves, and from the abode of the dead, to meet their punishment at that day, with the survivors of their party.

The apostle continues, speaking of their doom:—

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in,” or “with,” or “among,” “his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,” or “to be the object of their praise and adoration.”

Immediately afterwards, the apostle proceeds to obviate certain mistaken notions, which the Thessalonians had conceived, respecting the very near approach of the day of Christ’s coming:—

CHAPTER II.

1. “Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning ¹ the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

It appears from this, that the primitive church was attempted to be thrown into confusion, and the minds of its members diverted from their proper duties in life, by a persuasion that the great day, the subject of so many prophecies, when the Saviour was to appear again and gather all his elect around him, was about to come

¹ ὑπερ.

immediately. It appears, too, that the artful adversary was as forward in helping this delusion as he will be, in a future day, in keeping the world in secure forgetfulness of the day of the Lord. Pretended revelations, it seems, as well as feigned messages and epistles from the apostles, were produced to promote this untimely and hurtful expectation: but no, the day was not yet arrived when the kingdom of God could be likened to "ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom." Many ancient prophecies remained to be fulfilled before the coming of the Messiah in his kingdom:—

3. "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first,"—or rather, "unless THE APOSTASY come first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Dr. Macknight well observes, that the word apostasy¹ here is emphatical, denoting both that this was to be a great apostasy, the apostasy by way of eminence, and that the Thessalonians had been already apprized of its coming. "Remember ye not," continues the apostle in the next verse, "that when I was yet with you, I told you these things." So that the event of such an apostasy, to take place hereafter, was a fact well known in the church; and not only the apostasy in general, but the future development of an extraordinary character, whom St. Paul here denominates "the man of sin." This, from the circumstances of the case, can be no other than the great actor in the scenes of the latter days, denounced

¹ Η ΑΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ.

in the Psalms and in the ancient Prophets; especially under the symbol of "the little horn," in the vision of Daniel, which we have already seen to apply, almost without a possibility of doubt—history having interpreted prophecy—to the Papacy; and the reader will find, in Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, a very able and satisfactory dissertation on this prophecy of St. Paul; where the application of the symbol of "the man of sin" is clearly shown to belong to the papacy, and to the papacy alone.

This prophecy, then, asserts that the coming of Christ could not be looked for until after this "man of sin,"—the power symbolized by the little horn of Daniel, was revealed. He had not yet been revealed; the church and the world had never seen such a character: but the apostle refers to a conversation that he had had with the Thessalonians, in which he had explained to them what, in the present state of the world, prevented the appearance of this great corrupter and persecutor.

"And now ye know what withholdeth,"—or, "And ye know what now restraineth 'him,' that he might be revealed in his season. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth, will let until he be taken out of the way."

"The Christian fathers universally understood the *restraining* power to be the Roman empire; in which opinion, whether it was derived from tradition or from conjecture, they seem to have been well founded."¹ The situation of the empire, as it then stood, did not admit of the manifestation of this character in its relative position,

¹ Macknight. See also Bishop Newton.

described in prophecy. The empire, according to Daniel's vision, must first of all be divided into its ten sovereignties; because this proud blasphemer must come up, as an eleventh, after them.

The seventh verse is well explained by Dr. Macknight, "A mystery is something secret or undiscovered,"—"the mystery of iniquity, therefore, is a scheme of error not openly discovered, whose influence is to encourage iniquity."—"The hidden scheme of corrupt doctrine on which that wicked tyranny is founded, and the pride, ambition, and sensuality which are nourished thereby, already inwardly worketh among the false teachers," &c.*

"And then shall that wicked,"—"that lawless one,"¹—"be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit"—or "breath"—"of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

If this applies to the same character, as many suppose, it plainly intimates that the corruptions of popery subsist to the very last, and will only be put an end to by the sentence of the Judge, when he shall appear in his glory,—“when he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall slay *the wicked*.” But a question may certainly arise in the interpretation of this verse, whether by “the wicked,” or “the lawless one,”² the apostle means the same as “the man of sin”³ of the former verse, or whether a new character, in the ultimate state of the apostasy, be not designed—at least, a new characteristic of that apostasy. If so, we shall couple “the man of sin” with Daniel’s

* Compare Habakkuk, ii. 4, &c.

¹ Macknight,

² ὁ ἀνομος.

³ ὁ ἀνθρώπος τῆς αἰματίας.

little horn of the fourth beast, as joint symbols of the PAPACY, and "the wicked," the emphatic "lawless one," with the king that doth according to his will; the symbol of the "possessors of sovereign authority," or "political power," in the fourth or Roman empire — as history has begun to explain. The apostasy that manifests itself among the professed Christians of the Roman world, first perverts the truths of the Gospel, and substitutes in their stead the demoniacal superstition and abominable idolatry of popery; but at length arrives at that further pitch of wickedness, that the rulers and governors of the earth throw off all disguise, and act on the avowed principles of infidelity; and, in the character of antichristian infidels, rather than in that of superstitious papists, shall, perhaps, in the last instance, make war with the Lamb,—

"Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved: and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

"Whose coming" has, by most commentators, been understood of the rise of this "man of sin" or "the wicked one;" but the construction of the text seems regularly to confine the application to the coming of the Lord just mentioned. The sense will be: The coming of the Lord Jesus, which you erroneously suppose to be at hand, does not take place till after this mighty struggle of the prince of darkness, opposing the right ways of the Lord, and, by various artifices, seducing the professed followers of Christ. "The miracles and lying wonders" mentioned in the text, as the facts of history

have shown, strongly mark the rise of popery in past ages: and were we sure that mankind are now become so enlightened by philosophy, that they can no more be imposed upon by such pretended miracles, the “deceivableness of unrighteousness” will be seen to exert its powers in some other different way. The subtilty of Satan has other resources, by which the boasting reasoner may become a dupe at last. It must be so. We read, — To those “who receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved, God will send a strong delusion, that they may believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Let us remember, then, in these last days, if superstition go out of fashion with mankind, the “energizing”¹ of Satan and “of deceit” is not at an end: —

An alarm, and a snare, and a pit,
Are prepared for thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

And it shall be that he that fleeth from the sound of the alarm
shall fall into the pit,
And he that getteth up out of the pit
Shall be taken in the snare. *

What St. Paul says in the fourth chapter of his first epistle to Timothy, respecting the same apostasy, may, perhaps, with advantage, be advanced in this place: —

“Now, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.”

The Holy Ghost, in the revelations he made to the

¹ Ενεργεῖα.

* Isaiah, xvi, 17,

prophets and apostles, had rendered this beyond all doubt, that in after times “some,” or rather, “certain persons”—the word here rendered ‘some’ is often used where many are concerned,—shall apostatize from the true faith:—

“Giving heed to seducing spirits,”—to teachers pretending inspiration, or actuated by evil spirits,—“and to doctrines of devils,”—rather, concerning demons.

By demons, the Greeks denoted those intermediate beings between the Deity and mankind that might be supposed to act as mediators or as guardian powers, protectors and patrons, and, as such, to deserve the worship of men. Hence “the Lords many” and “Gods many” of the heathen world. The introduction of the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of all the saints and of many angels, in the apostate churches of Christendom, has clearly fulfilled this prophecy, and the prophecy in Daniel respecting the worship of Mahuzzim.

The apostle proceeds, as he had heard from the Spirit, to designate these last apostates:—

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving, of them that believe and know the truth,” &c.

The expositors of prophecy, Bishop Newton especially, have pointed out the fulfilment of all these particulars in the history of the rise and progress of popery; in the gross impositions and feigned miracles of its promoters, in their deep policy in forcing the celibacy of the clergy, and in their distinctions of meats: nothing, indeed, can be more satisfactory to the unprejudiced mind.

I would also contrast, in this place, rather than in its chronological order, what, some years afterwards, St. Paul writes in his second epistle to the same person. I am of opinion, however, that as the picture of the *latter* times, in the first epistle, portrayed the ages of Romish superstition and idolatry, so this picture of the *last* times is intended rather for the delineation of the characters of men in the lawless age of infidelity, the last stage of the apostasy in the western world.¹

“ This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce or covenant breakers, accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors—or betrayers of trusts—heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”—“ Of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:”—

That is, these silly women. What a picture of a religious devotee! If devotedness to religious instructors were all that was necessary, they surely must know the truth! But all is a deception. These instructors are the deceivers, spoken of by our Lord, that should arise and deceive many; if it were possible, the very elect:—

“ Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”

That is, incapable of discerning and of appreciating the truth; —

¹ See Mr. Faber.

“ But they shall proceed no further ; for their folly shall be manifested to all men, as theirs also was.”

This last description of the artful seducer imposing upon the weak and credulous, has seemed to suit so well the prevailing influence of the Romish superstition, that few expositors have extended their thoughts further. But if we are right in distinguishing between the corruptions of the *latter* and of the *last* days, we must understand these verses of the seducers of this *last* period. In this last period, indeed, it is no where intimated in Scripture that the delusions of popery are at an end. It would sufficiently answer to the predictions of prophecy, if, in this mature age of the apostasy, that abject superstition, once arrayed in glory, but now driven from the high places of the earth, and superseded by infidel philosophy among the great and learned, were sent to seek its victims among the weak and ignorant, by the more grovelling arts of the less noble seducer. But, certainly, we must class with this remnant of the old dominant superstition, whatever, in these last days, under the semblance of religion, opposes “ the truth as it is in Jesus,” or is artfully imposed on the weak and illiterate under its name. Surely the prophetic picture before us is,—The stronger part of mankind are become daringly irreligious and unprincipled; and among the more lowly and weak, where you would hope for a more favourable reception of the Gospel, there the false system of some artful seducer or deluded fanatic opposes you, and supplants the truth.

We seem warranted, indeed, to conclude, that these corruptions increase in the professed church more and more towards the time of the end ; “ Evil seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

SECTION III.

Remarks on 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, and on Chapter xv.

WE next turn to the First Epistle to the Corinthians. I know of no other fair exposition of the second and third verses of the sixth chapter but that which refers them to the coming of the glorified saints with the Lord Jesus at the last day; —

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?”

The term rendered “judge” seems to have here the same latitude of meaning as the corresponding term in the Hebrew language, and applies to the general exercise of rule and authority. This passage is, therefore, parallel to the predictions in the ancient prophecies; “And the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom,” &c. &c. In what manner angels are subjected to the same rule and government, our information is at present inadequate to explain; but, perhaps, the ministering of angels, mentioned Heb. i. 14, has reference to their subjection to glorified saints, as the partners of the Redeemer’s throne: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?”

The fifteenth chapter of this epistle will principally claim our attention. There we have a full revelation respecting the resurrection of the dead; not, however, immediately of the general resurrection, as it includes that of the unjust, who “come forth to everlasting shame

and contempt." What this chapter treats of, is, the resurrection as it forms the blessed hope and expectation of the redeemed—the emphatical “children of the resurrection.”* It is a principal object with the apostle to show that there is to be a real resurrection of the *body*: that the Christian doctrine of immortality and of a future state does not only teach, that the spirit, when separated from the body—returning to its dust—will exist, and be blessed in the beatific vision; but that, in order to enter upon that state of being which is destined for the heirs of glory, the body itself must be raised from the dust, and the departed spirit again come into it.

This was a doctrine, it seems, which some early philosophical corrupters of the church wished to get rid of: they thought it, perhaps, a more refined and spiritual notion, to represent the soul of man as at once a glorified spirit in heaven, without regarding, as further necessary to its perfection, its former tabernacle, taken originally from the dust of the earth. But here our thoughts are not the thoughts of God: human philosophy, in these matters, speculates about things too high for its comprehension. It is certain, that the doctrine of the revealed word of God is totally different from this. It knows nothing of the glorifying of a separated spirit in heaven. It gives sufficient assurance, indeed, that those who sleep in Jesus are safe and happy in their separated state, in “the safe keeping” of God, and are “present with the Lord;” but the consummation of their bliss is still connected, by the divine decree, with the resurrection of the body,—as it is called in another place, “the redemption of the body;”† of the body sleeping in the dust of the

* Luke, xx. 36.

† Rom. viii. 23.

earth, or waiting its final change at the appearing of Christ. Such is the doctrine of the future state of the blessed, as taught in Scripture.

The apostle's argument, in the chapter before us, is equally against those who denied the resurrection of the body, as against those who denied the future existence of the soul altogether. It is also against those who taught that the promises of the glorious kingdom could be realized without a resurrection, who taught that "flesh and blood" might "inherit the kingdom of God."

But in all this important revelation, the apostle touches not upon the condition of those who "died in their sins," and who come forth to the judgment of the last day: he is speaking of that resurrection of which Christ is the "first fruits;" and he teaches its certainty—as to a real resurrection of the dead body—by the fact and by the known circumstances of Christ's resurrection. HE was not glorified as a spirit separated from its body: "his soul was not left in hell, nor did his body see corruption." It was shown to be the very same body in which he had toiled and suffered in the days of his flesh; the very wounds of the nails and of the spear were seen upon it. For there was this peculiarity in the resurrection of our Lord, that his body, after its resurrection, but before its glorification—before it endured that final change that rendered it a spiritual body—was exhibited to his disciples upon earth. They saw it and they handled it. It had flesh and bones, which a spirit had not. HE even ate in their presence. All this was to show, that as well the same identical body which he took upon him in the womb of the blessed Virgin, and in which he suffered upon the cross, as his human soul, in which he had been for three days existing in the separate state, was to be the

subject of that glory, which was “given him” in the eternal counsels of the Deity “before the foundations of the world were laid.” It is this same glory which he will give to those whom God hath given him, and this glory respects the whole man, both body and soul.

Having shown, in Christ’s resurrection, both the truth and the proof of our resurrection—the resurrection of the body—the apostle proceeds:—

20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept,—or, “are fallen asleep.”

“Which are fallen asleep in Christ,” as it is in the eighteenth verse: so that the resurrection treated of in the following verses is that of HIS people exclusively:—

“For since by man ‘came death,’ by man ‘came’ also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Conceiving “the resurrection to life” to be the exclusive subject in this Scripture, I believe the parallel to be, as in the fifth of Romans, between Christ, the federal Head of his people, and Adam, the head of human kind. As the one brought death, so the other brings life; not to the same persons, but to “the many”—“the all” whom they represented, which, in the one case, was all mankind; in the other, as many as God has given to the Redeemer out of mankind. “Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” “All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will, which hath sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

23. “But every man,” or, “each,” “in his own order: Christ, the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming; each according to his own proper destination or appointed order: Christ at one time; his people at another.”

Christ had already risen; “the first-fruits of them that slept” in him—“the first-begotten born from the dead,”—and they that slept in him would rise on his coming, at his second advent.

24. “Then [cometh] the end,”¹—or, “Then the end [shall be,”]—“when he shall have delivered,”—or, “will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have,”—or, “when he will put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;”—or rather, with Macknight, “Death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed;”—“for he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted that did put all things under him; and when all things shall be subdued unto him,”—or, “put in order under him,”—“then shall the Son also himself be subject unto,”—or, “put in order under him, that God may be all in all.”

A difference exists among commentators as to the meaning of this passage. I will state to the reader my conception of it—arriving at its exposition, after travelling through all the former prophecies that have been

* John, vi. 37, &c.

¹ Τὸ τέλος.

delivered on this same subject, and after having bestowed some pains to learn their language.

I conceive that “the end” in this passage refers, not to the end of the period of the predicted reign of Christ and his saints upon the earth — if that reign, properly speaking, has an end — but, as the term usually applies in prophecy, to the putting an end to the present dispensation of grace and providence, in order to give place to the new dispensation, belonging to which is the reign of Christ and his saints upon earth.

Such was the meaning of “the end,” or “the end of the world,” in our Lord’s prophecies, and of the “time of the end,” in Daniel, and of “the last days,” and similar expressions, universally throughout the Scriptures. “The delivering up the kingdom to God, even the Father,” refers, accordingly, to some transaction that takes place between the FATHER and the SON at the time of the commencement of Christ’s personal reign upon earth:—at its commencement, not at its end, in whatever sense that reign may be said to have an end, when Satan is released, or when the second resurrection and judgment of the wicked dead take place. It will be asked, what kingdom, then, is delivered up, at the era of the second advent, by the SON to the FATHER, or rather, by the God-man¹ to the UNBLENDED DIVINITY?² I answer, in the words of Dr. Macknight, though not exactly with his views and inferences,—“His mediatorial kingdom,” called, Matt. xxviii. 18, “all power in heaven and in earth, administered by the SON for the good of his *church*.” Or, more correctly, that mediatorial kingdom, with respect to his *church* whom he hath purchased to

¹ אל גבר.

² ידוה.

himself out of mankind ; not with respect to the whole race of Adam, which he will either visit with vengeance or restore. But “ the church of the first-born that are written in heaven,” being now “ made one” with God in Christ,* with respect to them the mediatorial charge and dominion ceases ; for “ a mediator is not of one.” This mediatorial kingdom the Redeemer now possesses, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Virtually, we doubt not, before all time began, he stood before God in the character of Mediator of his people : but we are referred, by the language of Scripture, to a period after his actual assumption of humanity, after his resurrection and ascension, when he is solemnly manifested in this high character, and “ all power in heaven and earth is given into his hand,” that he may save to the utmost them that come to God by him, being invited by God “ to sit at his right hand till he should make his enemies his footstool.” And to this agree the words of the twenty-fifth verse in the passage before us : for he must reign till he, God, hath put all things under his feet : both passages referring to the one hundred and tenth Psalm :—

Thus spake Jehovah to my Lord,
 “ Sit thou on my right hand,
 Till I make thine enemies
 The stool of thy feet.”

Compare also the second Psalm and the parallel passages.

The “ putting down of all rule, and all authority, and power,” I refer, accordingly, to the destruction of all the tyrants and oppressors of the church, and of all the

* John, xvii.

power of the prince of darkness : according to the usual tenor of prophecy — “ the visiting of the host of high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth on the earth ; ” or in the language of the Psalm just quoted : —

After the order of Melchizedec
Is my Lord at thy right hand :

Kings shall he smite in the day of his wrath,
HE contendeth with the nations, filling all with dead bodies ;
HE hath smitten the head of a great country.

In short, it is still the destruction of Antichrist, that emphatical enemy, whom we have seen all along to be the object of the great Redeemer's vengeance when he shall appear. At that time, too, as we have ever been told, “ the last enemy, death, is to be destroyed,” “ put down,” as the same word is rendered above, or more strictly, be so debilitated or restrained in its powers, that it can no longer injure as an enemy.

Observe, it is not the subduing of death, as holding the wicked in subjection, which is here contemplated ; but the victory over death, as having power to seize and to hold in subjection the people of God ; that is to say, their bodies. In this sense, death is their last enemy, the last enemy that could ever touch them in the least degree ; and in this sense death is destroyed, when, at Christ's second coming, the dead rise in their glorified bodies, or when the living saints experience such a change that death hath no more dominion over their animal frame.

The “ kingdom,” therefore, in this passage, I understand, not of the personal reign of Christ upon earth, commencing from his second advent, but of his reign now, as seated at the right hand of power, — as seated,

not in his own throne as Messiah and King of glory, but on the throne of God, having "all power in heaven and in earth" committed into his hand, till the mediation be finished; so that "the FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the SON," as it is expressly said, "because he is the Son of man." With the absolute Deity—often designated by the term FATHER ALMIGHTY, or GOD EVEN THE FATHER, when not the eternal personalities so much, as the office and mission of the WORD and of the SPIRIT are to be distinguished;—with absolute Deity existing in FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, three persons in one undivided essence, creation has as yet no immediate connexion; not this lower creation at least, from the sons of Adam downward.

"The elect angels," we know, do now "behold the face of the heavenly Father:" they are already fixed in their eternal state, having been separated from those of their kind who are gone into perdition. They have already been presented in the Divine Presence by the Eternal Word, "by whom and for whom they were created," "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers."

But this relates to a *former world*, whose dispensation has been so far finished. The world that now is,—in its creation so much lower, in its destined end so much higher, than the angelic,—where the Son of God assumes his destined created nature, even the likeness of a fallen creature, and gives himself for his church, that he may exalt, from the lowest depths of misery, a peculiar people, to the glory of his grace, and carry them with him, as his kindred and his spouse, far above all heavens—"which things angels desire to look into:"—this creation is unfinished as to its final results, and not yet

presented by its Maker, as the finished workmanship of his hands.

The only begotten, that is in the bosom of the Father, the everlasting Son of God, who also becomes in time the first-born of every creature, who is God with God, and a creature with his creatures, He created it. He *let* the devil mar it in his hands, and is now fashioning it into another vessel, “as it seemed good to the potter to make it.” But the accomplishment of these *new ends*, if it were lawful so to speak of the everlasting counsels of God, whose will none hath resisted; to accomplish these new ends, He that was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, divests himself of his glory, and assumes the form of one of his creatures: hence the wonderful mystery of the incarnation; the obedience of him that was God, as a servant and a man; his passion; his death — the death of the Lord of glory, giving himself for his church: hence the high exaltation of him who had made himself so low: hence the enriching again of him who, by identifying himself with a portion of his fallen creatures, suffered himself to be impoverished to the utmost. Though clothed with humanity, he “ascends where he was before;” God, even the Father, hath exalted him to his own right hand in glory, and hath given him “power over all flesh” — “all power in heaven and earth.”

The ALMIGHTY FATHER, if we may so represent it, sustaining the absolute perfections of the Deity — the triune Jehovah — has retired into the inaccessible light — the screen spread before the recesses of his royal throne. But the Son of Man is *visibly* seated thereon, and sways the sceptre of Deity; angels and principalities being made

subject to him, "that he may execute judgment, and save to the utmost all that come to God by him."

Moreover, while HE solely sits exhibited on the throne as Ruler in providence, till the mystery of redemption be accomplished, the HOLY SPIRIT condescends to be personally sent forth to be the COMFORTER or PATRON of Christ's church below, his invisible agent, to act in the hearts of his people, while, as to his humanity, he is absent, and "gone to appear in the presence of GOD for us:" so that now we come not immediately under the rule of God even the FATHER; he has committed us into other hands; Christ is PRINCE as well as SAVIOUR, and when it is said "we have access *through him*, by the SPIRIT, unto the FATHER," the term *through him* implies, that with him, the man Christ Jesus, the direct communication stops; he alone enters within the veil to appear before the presence of God for us: and all acts of providential government—the entire rule over us, is committed into his hand: all prayers from earth to the God of heaven are laid before him, and taken into his hands as Mediator.

But this state of things will not always last; when the elect of God shall have received "their perfect consummation of bliss both in body and soul;" when the decree is fulfilled, that all the called and justified should be conformed to the image of the only begotten Son, then, with respect to them, the mediatorial reign of Christ—at least one dispensation of it, which provides for their acceptance as *sinful* creatures—its purposes having been effected, is at an end. It is no longer "a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The redeemed are then "presented by their triumphant

Lord, faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.”*

A Mediator is still wanted between “ God even the Father ” and the nations upon earth ; for, as we have seen all along, there still remain nations upon earth : and THE SON is about to descend on earth again, and to reign, not merely by his Spirit, but personally. His elect remnant, however, whose number is now accomplished, are not so much the *subjects* of this reign, as the partners of the great King in his rule over the earth ; are so honoured by the grace of their Restorer that they are called “ not servants,” but “ friends : ” according to a standard metaphor of Scripture, the redeemed of the Lord are now “ the bride,” “ the Lamb’s wife,” the spouse of Christ, made one with Christ, and, through that link of union, one with God.

The mediatorial reign over the earth is not given up to the FATHER ; but the mediatorial reign over the glorified saints. They are “ the children of God, being the children of the resurrection,” and after having been presented to their God and Father, complete in Christ, they are commissioned by their Father to go forth as the brethren and companions of their only Saviour and Lord, to judge the world, and govern the nations upon earth. The nations upon earth are the subjects immediately of the kingdom, not of the FATHER, but of Christ and his saints : and the saints in their reign have certainly, by delegation from the one Mediator, somewhat of a mediatorial character ; for they are to reign with Christ, and are “ *priests* of God and of Christ.” But the kingdom over these glorified saints is that of GOD even the FATHER ; and hence our

* Jude, 24.

Lord, in the days of his flesh, spake of being with his disciples in his FATHER'S kingdom.

It is the FATHER'S kingdom with respect to glorified saints; it is "the kingdom of his Christ" with respect to the world below; where HE, having "put down all rule, and all authority, and power," receives, as the SON OF MAN, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

27. "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted that did put all things under him: and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

The apostle here quotes from the eighth Psalm, and comments upon it: "Thou hast placed all things under his feet." The subject of that psalm is certainly the exaltation of the manhood, first in the person of the Lord, and then in the persons of all his redeemed, to the head of all created nature.

: When I behold the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
: The moon and the stars, which thou hast disposed;

What is man that thou art mindful of him,
And the Son of Man that thou regardest him?

Thou madest him for a little while lower than the angels,
And thou crownest him with glory and majesty.

Thou givest him dominion over the works of thine hand;
Thou hast placed all things under his feet, &c.

It appears, from another comment upon this psalm, in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “that the Holy Ghost is not speaking of the station which the first man, Adam, was made to assume, at his creation, over the inferior animals; but that he is speaking of the second man, the Lord from heaven — of his taking our nature upon him, and so becoming inferior for a short time, as to that nature, to “the thrones, and principalities, and powers,” whom his own hand had made, and whom guilty men were worshipping as gods. Lower than the angels was he, as man: lower than the good angels, for they were employed to protect his feeble humanity, and appeared to strengthen him; lower than the bad angels, for they continually harassed him in his path, and, in their permitted hour, were suffered to triumph in his death.

In consequence, however, of his meritorious obedience, as “the Son of Man,” he was in that nature to be exalted far above all intellectual beings; and, in his rise, was to exalt to the same eminence the humble objects of his redemption: “For unto the angels,” says the apostle, “he hath not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak: but one, in a certain place, testifieth, saying, *What is man,*” &c. &c. After quoting the passage, he continues: “For in that he put *all* in subjection under him; he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him: but we see Jesus, who was made, for a little while, lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste of death for every ‘one.’ For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation

perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

From this exposition of the apostle, it appears, beyond all doubt, that the subject of this psalm, and, consequently, of the passage we are considering, is the exaltation of "the redeemed from among men," in and with Christ, their Surety and Head, to be the inheritors and lords of a better world to come. These things belong to a new and better world; the heirs of glory are not of this world; but still the seat of their dominion is on the earth, where they are to reign with Christ in his kingdom.

"All are to be put under the feet of Christ." There is, indeed, one manifest exception: the ETERNAL GOD-HEAD is, of course, not submitted to the sceptre of the SON, as God-man and King of glory. But the very naming of this one exception clearly proves that the 'all' is to be taken in the utmost extent. Every thing except DEITY itself is to be subjected, or, as the word strictly implies, shall be *arranged in order under him*, to obey his commands: but when this is accomplished, which it will be at the second advent, — for he sits at the right hand of glory, awaiting the subjection of all that oppose his kingdom, — "then, even the SON himself shall be subject to him that subjected all to him."* This language seems to imply that the SON is not now subject to the FATHER, or *arranged in order under him*, for the purpose of executing his commands; and, in some sort, this must be the case. The present transaction between the FATHER and the SON, or the absolute Deity and the God-man, as far as we can conceive of it, or speak of it in human

* Macknight.

language, is rather, the resigning all the exercise of authority and power over this lower creation, and giving it into the hands of HIM who has taken man's nature upon him, — He is “ Lord of all,” and “ God over all.” But when he shall have accomplished the object of his present mediation with respect to his elect, has perfected them in glory, and has reconciled all things to God, the whole Deity will shine forth on his saints perfected in holiness ; and then the SON, in his glorified manhood, quits, as it were, his station on the celestial throne, and is content again to go forth in his inferior nature, as “ the sent ” of the Father. He receives a commission to go forth and reign as God's anointed King over his creation ; and united with him in his dominion are all his saints, whom he hath bought and sanctified by his precious blood-shedding.

In this transaction, the SON himself is *arranged in order under the DEITY*, in a manner in which he was not manifested to be before, while he sat on the throne of Divine Providence, that GOD might, *in him*, reconcile the world to himself, not admitting his chosen to his presence till the entire redemption of the purchased possession be completed. But that world being reconciled, and his name hallowed, in the destruction of the wicked and in the glorifying of his elect, with respect to them, “ God is now all in all,” and they behold the face of their FATHER which is in heaven as his holy angels do. With respect to the elect, there is no longer the interposition of a Mediator : at the height at which they stand, they see the glory of GOD even the Father. The Mediator, in some sort — as far as the mere creature is capable — has exalted them to the station where he himself stands in glory ; so that now, to their contemplation, as to the BEING to whom they present themselves

and their services, "God is all in all." There is nothing but GOD, nothing but manifested DEITY to them.

With respect to the manhood, which is taken into God, in personal union with the eternal Son, to use a Scriptural figure, they are *married* to it. That glorified manhood is now their possession, their fruition, their bond of union with God; they are raised, as far as mere creatures can, to a level with it; are "conformed to the image of God's only begotten Son;" they see him as he is, and are like him. So Christ prays, "That they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me; and the glory that thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."*

These "vessels of mercy" can now, through their glorious Head, hold immediate communion with DEITY; and as CHRIST was before "all in all," now GOD is "all in all." Before their glorification they had no access to GOD immediately: GOD took no account of *them* but as in CHRIST: out of CHRIST, GOD was a consuming fire to all the workers of iniquity, and his holiest saints in themselves were no other: so that *in Christ* alone they could be sheltered from his burning wrath; and in all their worship, and in all their services, they could not, because still polluted with sin and corruption, meet the holy eye of absolute DEITY. They cast themselves upon the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ; to him alone they lifted up the thought of their heart. Christ, as Mediator

* John, xvii. 21.

between God and man, was “all in all:” but now, being made perfect through his mediation, and made partakers of his glory, and having been exalted to sit on his throne, his interposition, as Mediator between two, is no longer needed; they are presented to GOD as GOD,—FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, three persons but one essence; for this is the ONLY GOD. And though the manifestation of Deity, from the very economy of that Divine Being, is still in the person of the SON, yet an actual manifestation of the Godhead is made. The God-man does not only, as such, manifest his own glory, but he manifests the glory of the Deity, as the essential image of the invisible God. His saints behold, not only the glory which God hath *given* to him as God-man, but they behold in him the glory of the Father, as he is the everlasting Son, the Light of Light, and very God of very God, who is in the bosom of the Father, and maketh manifestation of the Divine Presence, and communicates to all created nature the energizing of the Holy Spirit. Thus, to them who are glorified with Christ, God is all in all; and they are themselves manifested to the world below, as joint heirs with Christ in his kingdom, partakers of his kingly and of his priestly characters.

Such I believe to be the meaning of the delivery of the kingdom to the Father, and of the subjection of the Son himself, and of God’s being all in all where formerly Christ was all in all.

The apostle proceeds with his revelation respecting the resurrection of the dead; and he argues, in the twenty-ninth and following verses, from the sufferings and imminent danger to which Christians in general, and the preachers of the Gospel in particular, were exposed in this world; that nothing but this glorious hope of

everlasting life in the world to come could make the hope of a Christian a reasonable hope. In the thirty-fifth verse he meets a difficulty, which human ignorance had suggested, about the resurrection of the dead, as taught in the church of Christ:—

35. “ But some man will say, How are the dead,” or, “ How can the dead be raised up? in what body do they come?”

“ The apostle here,” as Dr. Macknight observes, “ mentions two questions which were put by the philosophers, for the purpose of overthrowing the doctrine of the resurrection.” The first, “ How is it possible that the dead can be raised up?” the second, if it be a thing possible, “ With what kind of body do they come out of the grave?” The first part of this question the apostle rebuts as a foolish and ignorant question. Was any thing too hard for God? Had they not before their eyes, continually, operations of nature, which were analogous to the resurrection of the body?—

36. “ Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.”

Does not every herb and plant around you spring to life from a seed, or body, that has died and rotted in the ground? Where you commit the seed to the soil, something from it, though vastly unlike it in form, springs up into life: you know not how; but the wonderful operation is continually wrought before your eyes. Why, then, should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?—

“ And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body

that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed its own body."

That which man commits to the earth is barely a grain of corn, of wheat for instance; he puts not into the ground the future plant, as it afterwards grows in all its beauty, the blade, and stalk, and ear. This is the body which God gives it, when he causes it to spring up from the soil; and he gives different kinds of bodies to different seeds, for there are a great variety, and each sort has a body given it of a kind peculiar to itself. The language here used implies, indeed, that there is something in the seed that does not die or suffer an extinction of being; but this is not what is called its body; the principle of vegetable life survives, but it loses its body; that dies and decays in the soil. God gives it a new body, and a very different body, in which the same vegetable life reappears on the surface of the soil. So it is with respect to the dead of human kind, which you inter in the ground: you know that their bodies die and return to their dust; but still a living principle survives, of which the same God who causes the grass to spring, has the keeping; and which he will quicken and raise up at the last day in a new and very different body—a body peculiar to risen saints, "as it hath pleased him."

Whether this vital principle be, alone, the separated spirit that angels carry to Paradise, or whether there be a vital principle besides—heaped in the dust of the earth—which cannot vegetate till that spirit is reunited to it, is immaterial to the truth of the illustration. Whatever is necessary to the identity of the man is preserved. There is, however, a sense in which it is not "that body" which rotted in the soil, or which the

waters drowned, the fire consumed, or on which the birds of the air and the beasts of the field were fed. "God giveth it a body," formed according to his pleasure: and though the *man* is the same, as to his consciousness and essential being, yet he comes in a body of a very different kind from that in which he was formerly seen before his death.

But why, proceeds the apostle, should this create a difficulty? What a wonderful variety of bodies and material substances are there in nature!

39. "All flesh is not the same flesh:"

There are even varieties here:—

"But there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory"—"the beauty and excellency"—"of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."—The beauty, and excellency, and appropriate nature of these celestial bodies differ also among themselves.—"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for,"—or rather, "nay," or, "moreover,"—"one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."

The dead are raised, indeed, in the bodies that God, according to his pleasure, will give them, but in bodies very different from what they had before; as different as one animal is from another; as different, in its nature, as the stars which shine in the heavens are from the substances found upon the surface of the earth, or in its entrails. As different is this body from the former in its beauty, in its excellency, in its peculiar functions and adaptation of parts, as the sun is different from the moon, the moon from the stars; and as they again are different

one from another—the planets from the fixed stars. Manifold are the works of God! The resurrection-body of his saints is one of his creations, and it is of a nature peculiar to itself, and has its peculiar glories.

The difference between the body that now is, which may be compared to the bare grain which is committed to the earth, and that body which shall be, which God will give to the dead, may be thus further specified:—“It is sown in corruption,” a body hastening to decay; “it is raised in incorruption,” a body that cannot fade or be destroyed; “it is sown in dishonour,” an abominable carcase that must be put out of sight; “it is raised in glory,” shining in splendour and majesty; “it is sown in weakness,” a poor, helpless, lifeless corpse, on which the worms may prey with impunity; “it is raised in power,” the risen saints are to be mighty in power and are to exercise dominion; “it is sown a natural” or “animal body,” differing not, in many respects, from the bodies of other animals, composed of flesh, and blood, and bones, and sinews; “it is raised a spiritual body,” what a spiritual body is doth not appear as yet; we can only say what it is not: it is not an animal substance, like our present bodies, nourished from the fruits of the earth. There is “a natural” or “animal body,” and there is “a spiritual body.” We are to keep this distinction in view, that we mistake not the nature of the Christian’s hope respecting the resurrection of his body, as though the term body could only be applied to such animal frames as we now inhabit.¹

¹ “By an animal body, the Greek commentators understood a body, to the animation of which the presence of an animal soul is necessary; and by a spiritual body, a body of so fine a texture that it will be supported merely by the presence of our rational spirit.”—MACKNIGHT.

45. "And so," or, "Thus also it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam, a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual."

What is meant by a "living soul" we have a proof in ourselves, in that nature which, in common with all our race, we derive from our father Adam. But the risen Saviour becomes to his people the source of a new and very different being; a *germ* of this spiritual existence is now fixed by the Holy Ghost within them, and being nourished from the same source from which it was taken, it must grow and increase. This is "the new," the "inner man." This reorganizes the souls and faculties of men into new creatures. Their animal frames, which they still wear, must fall into the earth and die: but their second Adam will quicken for them a spiritual body like his own, so that "in body and soul they will be like him."

The parallel here, be it again observed, is not between Christ and Adam, as two heads or stocks of the whole race of mankind, as some represent; but between Christ and Adam, as the heads of their respective children,—Adam of all mankind, Christ of the children of God—, 'the seed which God has given him out of mankind,' to whom he is "to give eternal life," and whom he is "to raise up at the last day." "Christ is called Adam, because believers receive their sanctified spiritual nature and their immortal body from him, just as mankind have derived their corrupted nature and mortal body from the first Adam." "This clause—'the last Adam a vivifying spirit'—is not in the passage of the ancient Scripture quoted by the apostle: these are his own words, formed upon what Christ said, John, v. 26:—*For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* As the apostle is speaking

here of Christ after he received his glorified body, he calls him a vivifying spirit, because the presence of his spirit in his glorified body is all that is requisite to preserve it alive for ever; and because he will communicate the same power to the spirits of the righteous, with respect to their bodies, after the resurrection."

"The apostle's meaning, therefore, in this part of his discourse, is, that the body which we derive from Adam is an *animal body*, which, to its life, as Locke observes, needeth the aid of food, and air, and sleep; whereas the body which the saints shall receive from Christ, at the resurrection, is a *spiritual body*, a body like Christ's, to the life of which no foreign aid whatever is necessary, but which will be supported, like his, merely by the presence of their spirit; on which account it is said, "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal to angels."¹

The apostle proceeds to illustrate the parallel between Christ and Adam:—"The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven." The contrast, observe, is between the first source of our being, who was created out of the dust of the earth, and the glorified Jesus, quickening his mystical body from above, and, especially, as raising his people at the last day.

48. "As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly."

As the sons and daughters of Adam, as born into this world, resemble their father Adam, so shall the children of the resurrection, as born into "the world to come," resemble the Lord from heaven, the "Father of the everlasting age:"—

¹ ἰσχυροὶ εἰσι.—Luke, ix. 36. MACKNIGHT.

49. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

This leads the apostle to state a principle of great importance for us to know, in pursuing our inquiries respecting the second advent, and the future state of the people of God:—

50. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Here we have a confirmation of what has often been advanced in these inquiries, that in whatever more extended sense we sometimes meet with the phrase, "kingdom of God," in its proper sense, and in its strict application, it refers to the state of the righteous after the first resurrection; and this state, we are here told, is of such a nature that "flesh and blood" cannot inherit it: we must be changed into a spiritual substance, in order to take our allotted portion in that kingdom.

This might well create a difficulty. How, then, shall they which are alive and remain unto the coming of our Lord, and are then "to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,"—how are they to divest them of their flesh and blood, and to be made capable of uniting with the risen saints, in order to their receiving the kingdom? This difficulty is next and distinctly answered by the apostle; and his answer affords very minute and most satisfactory information to the waiting people of God:—

51. "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the

dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave," or rather, "O hell," "where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such is a plain statement of facts — of things that shall be hereafter. We have not here the usual obscurity of prophecy, partially veiling what it sets before us. The mystery is altogether revealed: the language is so plain that it needs no comment. And what light does it throw upon the ancient oracles! and also upon a former revelation made by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians! and, especially, on the passage of the Old Testament here referred to by the apostle, and which he tells us is then accomplished:—

"And he shall penetrate in this mountain
The face of the covering cast over all peoples,
And the veil that is spread over all nations;
He shall penetrate death unto victory."

And again:—

"Thy dead shall live, their dead bodies shall rise;
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust:
For thy covering shall be as the dew of the morning,
And the earth shall drop the deceased from her womb."

They do, indeed, arise and sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory? The

apostle having in his view another passage of Scripture, as many imagine:—" I will ransom them from the power of the grave," or " hell;" " I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O hell, I will be thy destruction."*

I would only remark further, that these last observations and the quotation of the apostle fully confirm our exposition of the former part of this revelation, where " death, the last enemy, is said to be destroyed;" that it does not mean the destruction of death and the departed state absolutely; so that they no longer keep any of the dead in their custody, which destruction, as we shall learn hereafter, will take place at a very distant period after the glorifying of the righteous; but that the victory here in view is the releasing the redeemed people of Christ from the hand of death and from the place of their abode in the separate state. It is the destruction of death, as the enemy of Christ, and of his redeemed, that is in the view of the prophetic Spirit; and this takes place, not at the judgment of the wicked dead, but at the second coming of Christ to establish his kingdom upon earth. Enemies, in view of that kingdom, are both death and the separate state; the souls and bodies of Christ's people must be released from these, their detainers; and those that have not yet been seized by death must be changed into immortal, incorruptible beings, and put beyond his reach. This is necessary in order to their inheriting the kingdom of God.

And here we should remark, what has often imposed itself on our view, in consulting former prophecies con-

* Hosea, xiii. 14, &c. See Horsley on Hosea.

cerning the kingdom; that it is one thing to be an *inheritor* of the kingdom of heaven; and another thing, to be a *subject* of that kingdom, when it shall be manifested on earth. The *inheritors* of the kingdom are glorified saints; the *subjects* of the kingdom are the nations upon earth that shall survive the troubles of the last time, and the judgment of the apostate churches and nations. To *inherit* the kingdom, is, to be made partakers of its sovereign rule and authority in joint heirship with Christ. The Scripture, when it promises the people of God that they shall be “*kings and priests*,” and shall *reign* in life, has not used an indefinite language, merely expressive of greatness and dignity; but it has used proper terms to convey appropriate ideas. “The saints of the Most High” are to stand in the relations of *kings and priests*, to the inhabitants of a new world; they are to reign upon earth, and to be “priests of God and of Christ.” *On earth* they reign—here is the seat of their dominion: but, they inhabit not houses of clay: “the children of God being the children of the resurrection,” are “like unto the angels.” In order to inherit and take a share in this kingdom, they must of necessity be divested of flesh and blood. But a kingdom implies a people to be ruled; and a priesthood implies also a people for whom its functions are ordained. Those who are heirs of a kingdom, become kings. Those that receive a priesthood, “are ordained for men in things pertaining to God.”

We saw, clearly, in former prophecies, that the earth and multitudes of its inhabitants survive, to submit to the sceptre of Christ and his saints. “The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” Other Scriptures

have shown us, in this new world, the Jews restored to their own land; a new temple, and new services instituted; a sacred character given to Israel among the nations upon earth; their priests and Levites restored: all these things pertain to the regulation of things among men, in flesh and blood; and place will be found for the fulfilment of every prediction. But the dominion of the Lord and his heavenly hosts will be paramount to all this. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

SECTION IV.

The Sixth Chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy.

WE next pass to St. Paul's notice of this blessed epiphany, in the sixth chapter of his First Epistle to Timothy:—

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou keep the commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times"—"which, appearing—he will manifest—God in his own good time shall manifest—who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting."

There are two remarks I would make on this passage.

It was ever matter of surprise to me, as perhaps it has been to my reader, to find the epithets of "only Potentate," "King of kings, and Lord of lords:" applied to GOD, as distinguished from the SON, in his capacity of Lord and Christ; since these titles generally designate the SON's office and authority among men—the office especially which he is to assume at the last day. But the right understanding of the last passage of Scripture which we have considered, has presented to us the business of the second advent in another point of view. It hath shown us not only the kingdom of Christ, and of his saints, which is to rule over the earth; but it has also shown us the places of Christ, and his redeemed, in "the kingdom of their Father."

It represented to us the glorified Saviour, not only as coming to receive a kingdom upon earth, but as also delivering up one in heaven, which he had held as Mediator between God, even the Father, and his redeemed people; the absolute Deity having veiled itself in light not to be approached, and having committed all power and authority to the Son of man.¹ But it was represented to us, that when the many sons are brought to glory, the mediatorial reign, as to them, will cease;¹ and the SON, as glorified man, will descend from the station he occupied before, arranging himself among his brethren, to go again with them, "the first-born among many brethren," with delegated power from the DEITY.

We have seen, how, with respect to these glorified saints, Christ is not upon the throne of the SUPREME, otherwise than he is ONE GOD with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, "*God is all in all.*" As Lord and King,

¹ "A Mediator is not of one."

he is as one of them, having exalted them to his throne. They with him are lords and kings, and are to reign with him upon earth.

But these kings and lords have themselves a King and Lord, and the Son himself, as glorified man, "is arranged in order under HIM that put all things under him," in his capacity of Son of man. He sits with them in the kingdom of his Father—"equal to the FATHER, as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the FATHER, as touching his manhood." So that whenever he acts as "the Son of man," or in his character as Messiah, he acts in the character of a *subject*, acknowledging in GOD, "the only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords:" meaning, not of earthly kings and lords alone, but also of the children of the resurrection, whom he also "makes to inherit a glorious throne," and to be the heirs, lords, or possessors of the world.

The second remark that I would make upon this passage is, that though Timothy is personally addressed, whom Paul could not but know would not continue till the appearing of Jesus Christ: yet, in the usual style held by Scripture, when addressing the church generally on this subject, he is considered as waiting that coming: not only in that he must be raised to stand in his lot at the last day: but he is addressed as officially continuing and attending his charge until the second advent. And this style is uniform in Scripture, both as addressed to churches and to ministers.

The reason is plain: as the church is addressed as a body that never dies, so the ministerial character is addressed as that which never dies, but continues till the chief Shepherd appear. To apply, in illustration, the strictly analogous language of our laws; the one is a

corporation aggregate, the other is a corporation sole; both are deathless. Whatever becomes of the individuals or individual, the corporation dies not, till dissolved by a superior authority. What is said, therefore, in these Scriptures to churches and to ministers, is said to all churches and to all ministers.

SECTION V.

The Manifestation of the Sons of God, Rom. viii. 18., &c.

THE next passage we have to quote, which is found in the eighth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, respecting "*the manifestation of the Sons of God,*" will appear with great interest in this connexion. The apostle had been comforting those who suffered here with Christ, by assuring them "that they should be glorified also together with him;" he proceeds in the eighteenth verse:—

"For I reckon"—or, "I conceive, indeed, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

We have here the apostle's calculation of what deduction ought to be made from his former estimate of a Christian's happiness, on account of those present sufferings, which he had just acknowledged to be his frequent portion. And the apostle made his calculation at a time when the sufferings of Christians were abundant, and himself had also very largely partaken of them: yet, he says, he reckons that the afflictions of the believer in this present world, as well what he endures for Christ in the way of persecution, as those troubles with which it pleases God to visit him, in

order to the subjugation of the flesh, and his transformation into the image of Christ, "are not worthy to be compared" — are, comparatively speaking, so small that they do not deserve to be taken into the account, when we are anticipating in hope the promised scenes of future bliss. No language, indeed, can more forcibly convey this notion, than that used by the apostle to the Corinthians on the same subject: "For our light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

19. "For the earnest expectation of the creature" — or, rather, "of the creation, waiteth for" — or, "is directed to THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD."

The apostle sees universal nature, fixed, as it were, in anxious suspense, and looking in expectation of some great event, which is none other than THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD; the full exhibition and public acknowledgment of the heirs of promise, "in the glory that is to be brought to us at the coming of Christ," — when "they that are the desire of all nations," "shall come;" and their dominion be established in righteousness under the whole heavens.

Now the "creation," it appears, as well as the believer, is much interested in this event; and every thing bespeaks its greatness, and its importance, and the superior blessedness of those whom God shall so delight to honour. By creation, St. Paul means the whole fabric of nature, as formed by the great Creator in subserviency to man, all of which has been much affected by his apostasy from God, and awaits a glorious restoration, when the work of the Redeemer shall be finished.

20. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not

willingly, but by reason of Him that subjected the same in hope.—Or, perhaps, “For the creation, (not willingly, but through Him who subjected it) was subjected in hope. Because the creature shall itself be delivered”—or, “seeing the creation itself will be emancipated from the bondage”—or, “slavery of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

‘The fabric of nature, so much of it at least as is connected with man, and was formed for his habitation and service, is now subjected to vanity. It does not now answer the end and design for which it was created; not agreeably, at least, to the excellency of the plan devised in the mind of the Creator. In numberless instances, its noblest productions and greatest blessings are lost, or perverted to evil instead of good.’ The whole scene around him has been affected by the fall of man. *His* aberration from his proper orbit has disordered the course of nature; and all inferior beings have, in a manner, been dragged after him into the same abyss of corruption. “Not willingly.” The apostle personifies creation, and represents it as neither by its own will becoming subject to vanity, nor willingly enduring the bondage. When the Almighty considered the works of his hands, he pronounced every thing that he had made to be “very good.” It is from no failure or imperfections of the creature, that what we now see has taken place; the subjugation of the creation to vanity, and the bondage of corruption. It was not its own act; but came to pass through its connexion with man. He has subjected it, or the great Creator on his account.

The sentence of God was, “Cursed is the ground

for thy sake; thorns also, and thistles, shall it bring forth to thee." This is not to be regarded as a particular instance, but as a general intimation of the subjugation of the powers of nature to vanity. By "thorns and thistles," we may understand noxious weeds in general; in the production of which, the same powers of nature are employed, as in the most valuable productions; yet they are useless, and do but mock the cultivator's toil. In the animal world, also, we see many instances of the same subjection of the creature to vanity. Here, how often does nature bring forth for nought! Birds, beasts, and fishes, let loose upon each other, full of evil dispositions, exhibit, as it were, in the oppressor and the oppressed, an exact counterpart to the wretchedness of man.

Consider, in this view, the disorder in the elements, experienced, more or less, in every climate. What ruin and devastation! What a continual frustration of purposes, and revocations of apparently destined blessings! How short, in a general point of view, of what the powers of nature could, and in some instances do, accomplish!

A promise, indeed, has been interposed in mercy; "that summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, shall not fail;" and man may therefore toil in hope of the reward of his labours. But the very circumstance of a promise having been given, implies, that such had been the disorder introduced—such the perversion which the powers of nature and of all second causes had suffered; that but for *His* staying hand, who, in a similar manner, to prevent the entire destruction of the human race, put a check upon their evil propensities, the regular revolutions of the seasons, upon

which the subsistence of man and beast depends, were in danger of being interrupted, and might have failed in their expected returns.

Look again at the actual state of the surface of this globe, as subjected to the dominion of man. He was bid to subdue and replenish it: but see to this present hour its fairest parts lying desolate—the most valuable productions useless and waste; the “rain falling upon the land which no man inhabiteth;” extensive continents—“the habitation of dragons—the joy of wild asses.” See, too, whole races of men pining in want and in squalid misery, appearing scarcely human; where, had but the gifts of nature been applied to their destined end, they might have enjoyed themselves as in a paradise. Think, moreover, of the human intellect uncultivated—man, created in the image of God, become ‘an ignorant hind’—a prowling savage, in the wilds of America and Africa—a ferocious cannibal in the islands of the southern ocean.

What is worse, see the good things of nature, where they are enjoyed in the greatest perfection, and where the intellect of man is most cultivated; used to the dishonour of God, and become a snare, and an occasion of misery to man! See the fine powers of reason and imagination employed to counteract the mercies of God, and to establish more firmly the empire of sin! Surely this is that part of the subjugation to vanity, of which the creation, if it had a voice, would most loudly complain, and from which it would ask most earnestly for deliverance.

The abuse, however, is permitted but for a season. The apostle, still personifying the creation, says it is “subjected in hope.” It has the expectation that it

shall not always remain in this debased state, but shall one day be delivered from this subjection to the vain purposes of its degenerate master. It cherishes the hope of better times, and of being used to more noble and more suitable purposes. And it is no less extraordinary than true, that in every age of the world it has been the constant belief and expectation of mankind, that nature is not now in that state of perfection in which it once was; but that that primeval state of things, that "golden age," will at some distant period be again restored.

In the narrative of the sacred page we perceive the grounds of this tradition. Prophecy announces that the common expectation of mankind will not be disappointed.

22. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," or "travaileth in pain to this present [hour.]"

Employing still the metaphorical language which he had adopted, St. Paul represents creation distressed at its present slavery and abuse, and big with expectation of this great event, as groaning like a woman labouring with child. So that imagination may hear in the jarring elements, in the raging storm, in the bursting volcano, or in the more tremendous earthquake, the convulsive throes, as it were, of an agonizing mother. Thus the fabric of universal nature echoes in loud responses the daily prayer of the church, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within our-

selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" [or, "even we ourselves within ourselves do groan, earnestly desiring the adoption — the redemption of our body.*"]

The adoption means here the public manifestation of the children of God at the resurrection; the apostle's styling it "the redemption of the body," clearly connects the event which the whole creation is longing for, together with the saints themselves, with that resurrection or change of the mortal and corruptible part of the saints, which was the immediate subject of the last passage we considered: and we may compare with this, instead of quoting them separately, the following passages. In his epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul, speaking of the Holy Ghost, as given to the church, calls him "The earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;" or, purchased people, as some render it. And again, chapter iv. 30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, by which ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And compare, too, St. Paul's emphatical mention of the resurrection of the dead, Phil. iii. 11, "That by any means I might attain the resurrection from the dead." But to return.

Not only the powers of nature and the various parts of the creation are anxiously waiting for deliverance; but even the people of God themselves, though in part they participate in the glorious liberty of the children of God, having received the Spirit of adoption, yet even they do groan within themselves for this same event; because the influence and indwelling of the Spirit, which they now feel, though it enables them to rejoice in hope, is but "a first fruits," "an earnest:" the adoption, in its full sense,

* Compare Ephes. iv. 30, &c.

they possess not yet. It is at present a secret whispered in their hearts by the Holy Ghost ; but their manifestation in the character of the sons of God is yet an object of “ hope that is not seen.” In secret the believer rejoices in his high birth ; but he waits for this great revolution of nature before he expects to receive its honours. It is “ the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Our “ life is hid with Christ in God ; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.”*

SECTION VI.

The Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

ST. PAUL’S account of the rejection and future restoration of Israel, in the eleventh chapter of this same Epistle, must not be entirely passed over. He tells us that this rejection of the natural descendents of the patriarchs was neither to be total nor final : that in every period of their abandonment, there would be a *reserve* of a part ; and, at a future period, a *resumption* of the general body. In the twelfth verse, he says : —

“ Now, if the fall of them was,” — or, “ And if their failure was—to be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness,” — “ how much more was their fulness to be ! ”

The apostle speaks as having the prophecies he had just quoted in his view. Did the prophecy speak of their

* See Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans.

failure as an event propitious to the Gentile world? So did it speak of the restoration of the Jews, when their fulness should come in, as being, to this same world, a season of still greater good! At the first, the Gentiles, in the abandonment of the Jews, were to be so far favoured as to "provoke Israel to jealousy;" but afterwards, when he should "be merciful to his land and his people," and "have avenged their injuries," the Song of Remembrance, to which he refers, exclaims, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people," which clearly intimated that they would be no less sharers in this great and glorious dispensation than the Israelites themselves.

This St. Paul explains in the fifteenth verse, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" Thus it must be—the apostle means to point out, according to the sure word of prophecy: and the comparison of the ancient oracles on this subject leads to the conclusion, that, by "life from the dead," the apostle means the resurrection of the dead, literally; and that this "first and blessed resurrection," the great event for which all nature and nations long, is intimately connected with the restoration of Israel: that the same Redeemer who comes to Zion to turn away iniquity from Jacob, comes, at the same time, to raise the dead that sleep in him, and to gather together all his elect, and establish the glorious promised kingdom, which will be "riches," indeed, unto the world.

Again; the apostle says, verse the twenty-fifth:—

"For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

A man is said to be wise in his own conceits when, in the absence of real knowledge and information, he persuades himself that he does understand, and, pleased with his fancied discoveries, vaunts his own false conceits in the room of true wisdom. To prevent this, St. Paul would unfold a mystery.

A mystery signifies some hidden truth, some secret in the plan or proceeding of God which *revelation* can alone explain. The mystery was this: this partial blindness or hardness (for the apostle admits not that it was universal) was only to last "till the fulness of the Gentiles was come in," "and so," or, "and then all Israel shall be saved." By the word "fulness" is intended, I conceive, that remnant which was then begun to be gathered, and still is being gathered, by the preaching of the Gospel. They are a body of people taken to "*fill up*," as it were, the gap or scissure made in Israel by the cutting off of so many of the natural branches: when the number decreed shall be completed, then will the end come of the present dispensation of Christ's kingdom, which will be succeeded by a more glorious dispensation, to commence with the general restoration of Israel.

Some, by "the fulness of the Gentiles," understand their coming in, in a mass, in contradistinction to this gathering of a thinly scattered people, which has hitherto been all the real effect of the preaching of the Gospel in the Gentile world. That such an event will take place is clear from prophecy; but then the conversion of all nations is an event predicted as *subsequent* to the restoration of Israel; but the "fulness of the Gentiles" here spoken of, will have come in *previously* to that event. Besides, the use of the word we render "*fulness*," in the New Testament, for the mass or generality, in opposition

to a part of, or a small portion of a people, does not seem so frequent as that of "something put in to fill up."

The "fulness of Israel," in the twelfth verse of this chapter, may, indeed, be urged to the contrary; and what is there called the fulness is certainly the bulk and general body of Israel, at the time of their restoration—all the survivors at least; but why they are called by this term is still a question. I am afraid there is reason to conclude from prophecy, that there will be found a dreadful *chasm to fill up* in the church of Christ, at the eve of these great events. We were told, in a former prophecy, that "the end shall not come, unless there come a falling away first." The world has long witnessed this great apostasy among nominally Christian nations, but it has not yet witnessed its end; and I much question whether we have any warrant in Scripture to expect, as to the world at large, before the day when the Son of Man is revealed, the decrease of them that have a form of godliness and deny its power. The words of our divine Master are awfully portentous:— "WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, WILL HE FIND FAITH UPON THE EARTH?"

The fulness of the nations may certainly be said to have come in, when the Gospel has gathered out of them all it can gather, and the nations themselves are given up to destruction; and this seems to be the fate impending over all apostate churches and nations at the second advent, when, as the apostle says in the following verse, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." And it is written also, in the prophecy from whence these words are quoted, that at that period,—

Darkness covers the earth,
And gross darkness the nations, &c.

We cannot but remark also, at the close of this eleventh chapter to the Romans, how the apostle is led to contemplate this restoration of the natural descendants of Abraham as the consummation of all the plan of redemption. For it is on this occasion that he exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" as though in the winding up of the history of Israelites and Gentiles—as the dispensation of the kingdom bears upon them respectively, you saw the development of all the mystery of providence and redemption. First, during the unbelief of the ancient people, the remnant from among the Gentiles obtain mercy, are raised at that era from a state of total darkness and unbelief by the almighty power of God. So, hereafter, from a similar state of darkness and unbelief, shall the ancient people of God be raised up by the same almighty power. Thus through the Gentiles' mercy they will obtain mercy: that is, I conceive—through a similar exercise of mercy.—An apostate people, the Gentile churches, will be given up to judgment—and God will be "found of them that sought him not, and made manifest to them that asked not for him"—Israel now "shut up in unbelief."

SECTION VII.

Heb. ix. 27, 28; *Tit.* ii. 11; *with 2 Tim.* iv. 6, and
1 Thess. i. 9; iii. 5.

SOME expressions in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, respecting the exposition of the eighth

psalm, and the putting in subjection of the world to come, not to angels, but to the Son of Man, we have already anticipated, in illustration of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. I shall only further quote, from this to the Hebrews, the twenty-seventh and eighth verses of the ninth chapter : —

“ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

This plainly contrasts the business of the first with the business of the second advent. At the first, the Redeemer came to die, that the many for whom he was made an offering might not die, but be quickened unto everlasting life : at the second, he comes to his waiting family, not with sin — the sins of his people imputed to him, that he might become a sin-offering for them ; but in another character, as their great Deliverer — “ the Lord from heaven.” And as his death saved them from the bitterness of death, so his coming again saves them from the judgment to come. For, as we have learnt before, both with respect to them that wake and with respect to them that sleep, the second coming of Christ delivers them from among those that are to abide the judgment of the strictness of justice, and from the vengeance to be poured upon the ungodly.

The Scriptures already considered will enable us to perceive, without comment, the bearing and true application of the following, Tit. ii. 11, &c. :—

“ For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and

godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and," — or rather, " even the glorious appearing of the great God, and," — or, " even our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And again, when, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, the apostle speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ : —

" Who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and kingdom."

And also, when expressing his resignation and hopes, the apostle, condemned, as it appears, to suffer the penalty of death, exclaims : —

" For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand ; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." *

We remark here, that " loving the appearing of our Lord" is used as a definition of, or, at least, as a sufficient characteristic whereby to designate a true believer : and the same style may be noticed in other passages. Thus the same apostle, speaking of the conversion of the Thessalonians, observes : " How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven : " † and again, in his prayer, for the same people, in his Second Epistle : " And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." ‡

* 2 Tim. iv. 6.

† Chap. i. 9, &c.

‡ Chap. iii. 5.

SECTION VIII.

The Catholic Epistles.

IN passing to the catholic epistles, we find St. Peter speaking in the same style: of “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time;” * and again, of “the grace to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” † He speaks, too, of the “appearing of the chief Shepherd,” when his faithful ministers shall “receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” His language, also, in his Second Epistle, to which we have already had occasion to refer, is much to be remarked:—

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.” ‡

That is, evidently, of that majesty in which the Lord Jesus will appear at his second coming.

“For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son,”—“This is my Son, the beloved in whom I am well pleased: and this voice, which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy.”

Or rather, “And so we have the word of prophecy more confirmed.” The prophetic word respecting the

* Chap. i. 5.

† Ver. 13.

‡ Chap. i. 16.

second advent was made more firm by the transfiguration: it was a specimen of that glorious era.¹

“ Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation :”

Is not to be interpreted apart by itself, but in connexion with the general scheme of prophecy.²

“ For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

What the Holy Ghost, therefore, has said by one prophet, must be compared with what he has said by another, in order to understand the prophecies of the Redeemer's coming. Here we must look for the true context, rather than to the particular circumstances of the individual prophet and his times ; a method which I trust has been carefully pursued in the present investigation.

St. Peter, too, clearly repeats the prophecies of our Lord, and of St. Paul, and of many of the more ancient prophecies respecting the abounding of false Christs and false prophets as a sign of Christ's second coming, of the great apostasy, and of the character of those last days when the Son of Man shall be revealed. For, as we have often seen, the consummation of wickedness and irreligion among the professed churches of Christ, at the eve of the second advent, is much in view of the Prophetic Spirit throughout the whole series of the divine oracles. As

¹ See Macknight's note.

² See Bishop Horsley's admirable Sermons on this text.

St. Jude tells us, in a prophecy very similar to this of St. Peter, " Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these ;" and so, as we have seen, did Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and all the prophets.

" But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

St. Peter has before him the same " mystery of iniquity," which St. Paul speaks of; he sees it beginning to work, and marks what will be its end, an absolute denial of that Master, who, according to the common profession of the whole Christian world, bought them with his death, to be " a peculiar people to himself." But when this corruption shall have attained its utmost pitch, then cometh that swift destruction predicted, as we collect from former prophecies, by the sudden appearance of the Master whom they have denied, from heaven with his mighty angels.

But, as former prophecies told us, great would be the extent of the evil before the judgment burst upon them.

2. " And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Hence, it is evident, that the characters here portrayed are not professed deists or infidels; they retain so much of the form of godliness that they are confounded with those that profess the Christian religion, for they evidently bring a scandal upon that religion:—

3. " And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you."

I fear the explanation which Dr. Macknight has given of these words is too true to be denied: "In this single sentence there is a clear prediction of the iniquitous practices of those great merchants of souls, the Romish clergy, who have rated all crimes, even the most atrocious, at a fixed price: so that if their doctrine be true, whoever pays the price may commit the crime without hazarding his salvation."

"Supposing that gain is godliness," another apostle has made the characteristic of the antichristian apostate, and wherever sacred things are bartered for money, or for worldly honour — wherever religion is made a trade of, and the stewards of the mysteries of God take the charge of the flock "for filthy lucre's sake," there is the spirit of Antichrist.¹ It is upon the Christian nations, full of these abuses, that the day of the Lord comes, "whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not," — or, "to whom the punishment, threatened of old, lingereth not, and their damnation," — or, "destruction, slumbereth not." God, the apostle proceeds to tell us, who spared not the fallen angels — who spared not the antediluvian world — who spared not Sodom and Gomorrah,

¹ Covetousness is early marked in history as the besetting sin and prevailing temptation that led to the apostasy of the Christian priesthood. "Passing rapidly from a condition of distress and persecution to the summit of prosperity, the church degenerated as rapidly from her ancient purity:" — "covetousness, especially, became almost a characteristic vice. Valentinian I., in 370, prohibited the

clergy from receiving the bequests of women; a modification more discreditable than any general law could have been: and several of the fathers severely reprobate the prevailing avidity of their contemporaries."*

* Hallam's View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 1.

will not spare these corrupters of the faith, and wicked professors of the Gospel, and their judgment will be as signal and as tremendous.

In the tenth verse these destined victims are again designated :—

“ But, chiefly,” or, “ especially, them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”

Does not this seem to point out the special character of that particular time when Christ shall appear? How the abject superstition of the papacy could have led to this spirit of rebellion, which would brook no restraint, and cast off all respect for their constituted rulers, and to God's appointed ministers of justice, might appear difficult to explain. Our forefathers, however, pointed out this spirit in the Papists, whenever the powers of the state opposed their peculiar interest: but, doubtless, we are to take in view the general state of apostate Christendom, in that falling away, when the “ man of sin” is revealed. This state of things may not arise exactly at his bidding. As himself is a government, of course it would not: but this would become the character of that Christendom that he had perverted from Christ; and over which, refractory as it might become, he would retain considerable influence to the last. And I cannot but think this spirit (prognostic of the last day) is already gone forth in the Christian nations. It is designated by its admirers as “ the love of freedom:” but in the late revolution it developed itself in its true character; and has certainly left a temper and feeling in Christendom, on the consequences of which it is not

easy to calculate. But, from the history of the past, and from certain intimations of prophecy, perhaps there is room to fear, lest the present factious spirit that is abroad, that will no more "be subject for conscience sake," will lead to the general establishment, after much disorder and dreadful commotions, it may be, of strong and violent military government: the lawful sceptre despised, the sword will bear rule!

It is not said, we remark, that there is nothing to blame in governments, and in the rulers of the earth, at this eventful era. The very contrary is supposed; that the holy angels are carrying a complaint against them before God. But the manner in which the enemies of governments conduct their opposition, is what is so strongly animadverted upon; they respect not the office which is of God, when they would oppose the man. Nay, the eye of God perhaps discerns that it is not the vices nor tyranny of princes that they hate; but that authority which puts the lawless to shame, and challenges a superiority which the proud are ill disposed to allow.

"Whereas angels, that are greater in power and might,"

—Greater in power and in might than the kings and rulers of the earth,

"Bring not a railing accusation against them: but these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption."

Respectful submission to the authority of rulers, is a distinguishing character of civilized society; without this, man becomes a savage—no better than those irrational animals, that cannot be tamed to any useful pur-

pose, but must be hunted down and destroyed : and the prophecy seems to say, that this will be much the case with respect to these unreasonable opposers of rulers and of the institutions of civil government.

“ And shall receive the reward of their unrighteousness.”

The apostle proceeds to take a view of these apostates, as already existing among the Christian brethren. He shows the “mystery of iniquity,” which was hereafter to lead to the great “falling away,” and manifestation of “the man of sin,” and of “the wicked one ;” as it had already begun to work in the false, covetous, and licentious members of some Christian churches, which he had in his eye. For, we remark, the same style of language is used by the Spirit of prophecy, when speaking of the apostasy, as when addressing the church or the ministry. It considers it as one and the same organized system, now beginning its antichristian efforts, and never ceasing to carry them on till it is confounded by the actual appearing of the Saviour. Hence, as Christ’s ministers were addressed as a body, which was to continue till their Master should arrive ; so are the false teachers, the many Antichrists : and as each faithful individual of the ministry will be present in the day that the Son of Man is revealed ; so, it may be, every leading member of the antichristian apostasy may be among the “many dead,” that, according to Daniel, at that hour come forth to the resurrection of condemnation.

“ They that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime, spots are they, and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you.”

As Dr. Macknight explains, "Deformities in the church, and causes of reproach, living in riot by means of their own corrupt doctrines, when they join you in your love-feasts."

14. "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness," &c.

We know precisely what Balaam's error was. For the love of wealth, which the great of the earth had to bestow, he would have prostituted his sacred character and office. In the great apostasy of the Christian clergy, this, too, was and ever would be a leading cause of defection.

17. "These are wells without water; clouds that are carried with a tempest,"

— And let fall no fertilizing showers,

"To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."

A remarkable exposure of the character of those, who for filthy lucre's sake, assume the teacher's office, and obtrude themselves into a service for which they are totally unqualified and unfit. But these same characters are some of them great boasters:—

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, by the same he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge

of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning: for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

This last passage strongly marks the fall of some, whose creed was pure, and whose principles, to a certain extent, had been efficacious in their moral influence on their lives: but the allurements of a spurious liberty deceive them—or rather betray them, and undeceive the world, respecting the supposition of any real change or conversion of soul. And we may say of this part of Scripture generally, that it describes the predicted apostasy of the Christian world, as beginning in the interested perversion of sacred institutions; and proceeding to the most undisguised licentiousness and disregard of all authority; till at length, as we read in the following chapter, the true believer, dwelling in the midst of nations enlightened by revelation, is surrounded by the sneers and scoffs of infidels. St. Peter speaks of this last temptation of Christ's church upon earth, as a matter which had often been enforced upon its attention:—

"That ye be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." *

* Chap. iii. 2.

These scoffers appear in the midst of the professed church; but they cast off all subjection to the laws and institutions of Christianity, and follow their own inclinations and private opinions. There had been some talk and expectation of the Redeemer's coming; but they mock the credulity of the waiting people of God. "Your favourite book talks of miracles and wonders. The fathers of your religion warned and alarmed the world with a notion of its approaching ruin. They are long since gone, and the world continues just as it always was." Thus will they despise the expectation of the righteous. The apostle continues:—

"For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.¹ Whereby, the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."

I understand the apostle to intimate, that the possessors of the revealed word might know, that as the ancient world was so constructed that the instrument of its destruction was, by the powerful word of God, made to subsist along with it till the day of the deluge, so, in the present structure of the earth, the materials of the fire which is to consume it, are already prepared.

"But the heavens and the earth that are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

These words of St. Peter seem to allude to the entire

¹ "Et terram, quæ ex aquis tatem suam consequutam esse sola quibus undique circumfusa erat, voluntate et potentia divina, &c." — SCHLEUSNER.
emersit, per aquam productam, aut formam, firmitatem et solidi-

destruction of the present mundane system: if so, we must understand by "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men;" not the fiery indignation poured upon the fourth apostate empire, but the last final judgment, at the general resurrection of the wicked. Or, perhaps both judgments may be in view of the Spirit; for the judgment of the apostates, at the first resurrection, is evidently a commencement of the last fiery indignation, that shall at length consume all the wicked, as we shall see more plainly hereafter.

8. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing; that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

The Church, when told of the coming of its great Redeemer, must not calculate the time of its fulfilment, as though it were the promise of a mortal, which, unless it be accomplished within the compass of a few short years, can never be accomplished at all: and where long delay may justly lead to the suspicion that the promise is forgotten. We must remember, as the ancient prophecy admonished us, time occurs not to the Almighty; and in his dealings with his church, and with her adversaries too, he invests them with immortality! His promise and his threatenings, though delayed a thousand years, will be true to the utmost, at last.

9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

As repentance is the gift of God, and HE bestows it on whom he will, taking away the stony heart, and

giving an heart of flesh ; and inasmuch as the new birth is not “ of the will of flesh,” I cannot otherwise interpret this passage than according to the prayer of our church : “ We beseech thee shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom, that we, with all them that are departed this life in thy faith and fear, may receive our perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting kingdom.”

10. “ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein”—or, “ during which*,—the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

This prediction appears to take in view all the results of the coming of the day of the Lord. It commences, as we have seen, with the fiery indignation that is poured upon the apostate nations of the Christian faith. In respect of that portion of the earth where his elect are tabernacling, the heavens being on fire will be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. This is the particular judgment we have all along heard denounced, both figuratively respecting rulers and peoples, opposed to the kingdom of Christ ; and literally, respecting the seat of the empire of the great Antichrist, and respecting his assembled armies. But not only the judg-

* Δι' ἧς.

ments at the very commencement of that day, which cometh as a thief, when apostates are destroyed by fire from heaven, when "the fourth beast is slain, and his body given to the burning flame," seem to be here in view of the Spirit; but the final judgments which are to follow when the prolonged season and time of the rest of the beasts is expired; when the general judgment of the wicked dead shall come, and men in the flesh perhaps be no more. The distinction made by Tindal, an eminent reformer and martyr of the church of England, between the subjects of the second and third chapters of this epistle to St. Peter, has often struck me as remarkable, — that he, living and smarting under the tyranny of the popedom, could still see, from declarations of Scripture, that when the popedom should decline, a worse enemy of Christ was to arise.

His observations are : — " In the second chapter, he," St. Peter, " warneth them of false teachers that should come, and through preaching confidence in false works, to satisfy their covetousness withal, should deny Christ;" — " and so describeth them with their insatiable covetousness, pride, stubbornness, and disobedience to all temporal rule and authority, with their abominable whoredom and hypocrisy, that a blind man may see that he prophesieth it of the pope's holy spirituality, which devoureth the whole world with their covetousness, living in all lust and pleasure, and reigning as temporal tyrants. In the third chapter he showeth, that in the latter days the people, through unbelief and lack of fear of the judgment of the last day, shall be even as epicures, wholly given to the flesh, which last day shall yet surely and shortly come, saith he: for a thousand years and one day is with God all one. And he showeth also how terrible that day shall

be, and how suddenly it shall come, and, therefore, exhorteth all men to look earnestly for it, and to prepare themselves against it with holy conversation and godly living."

"Finally: The *first* chapter sheweth how it shall go in the time of the pure and true Gospel; *the second*, how it should go in the time of the pope and man's doctrine; *the third*, how, at the last, men should believe nothing, nor fear God at all."

The prophecy in St. Jude's epistle is very similar to the former part of St. Peter's, and may serve to illustrate some of its expressions. Like that of St. Peter, it sees in the false teachers, which had already begun to show themselves in the church, the very root and origination of the predicted great apostasy, the actual forming of that combination of deceivers and corrupters, which, continuing its hurtful operations till the very coming of the Lord from heaven, would be then judged in his presence:—

4. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."

—"Who long ago have been before written to this very punishment:"¹ that is, they have been marked out by the ancient prophets, as being to subsist in the church in the latter days, and being to be punished in this very manner. St. Jude designates them much as St. Peter:—

"Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. I will, therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having once saved the

¹ Macknight.

people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not."

Such will be the fate of nations once enlightened with the Gospel, and delivered from the idolatrous practices of their forefathers, that they might stand in the relation of "his people," to the God of Israel:

"And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."

Apostate angels God has punished; and shall he not punish apostate Christians? —

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

This seems to intimate that the increase of *sensuality*, and the *violation of the laws of chastity* and of the *marriage bond*, will be a crying sin of Christendom in the last days: —

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers,"—or, with Macknight, "In like manner, indeed, these *shall also be punished*, being cast into a deep sleep. They — defile the flesh, and despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

Not merely relaxation of discipline and of loyalty, but a despising of all government, and reviling of the persons of those that bear its functions, was to mark at length the apostasy of the last times: —

9. "Yet Michael, the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring," — or rather, "did not attempt to bring" — "against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

To whatever event this refers, the instruction meant to be conveyed is evident—that the Head of angels, when protecting his church from a temptation to idolatry, in concealing the body of Moses,—or for whatever other cause he then concerned himself about the body of Moses,—he was resisted by the great adversary, did not bring a railing or reviling accusation against him, but was content with a mild rebuke, or rather, simple invocation of the interposing hand of God. This ought to be an example how all his servants ought to act towards the “higher” or “sovereign powers,” even in those instances where they are bound to contend with them, and where they verily believe them to be under the instigation of the same prince of darkness, opposing themselves to the interest of true religion.

Whenever, therefore, a disposition is observed in professing Christians to throw off all respect for those that are in authority, and to indulge in evil-speaking and reviling of those who bear the sword of justice, and exercise imperial power, and there are Christian teachers who teach men so, it is one of the marks of the last times; it is the consummation of that apostasy which brings upon the world “swift destruction.”

“But these,” despising such an example as the great archangel showed, and the positive precepts of their holy religion, “speak evil of those things which they know not,”*—of the measures of their rulers, which they are too ignorant to understand; “but what they know naturally as brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves;”—“but what they know naturally as ani-

* Ver. 10.

mals void of reason, by these they destroy themselves.”¹ This intimates that those pretended apostles of liberty that shall infect Christendom with their abominable principles, are themselves the slaves of sensuality; and that the increase of sensuality will be their ruin and punishment, as it was of the ancient heathen nations before Christianity came to their relief.* Indeed, the sanctity of marriage, as much of it as remains among us, seems much to depend upon the upholding of existing institutions:—

11. “Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”

This verse, I conceive, marks the several stages of the APOSTASY in the different ages of the church. First; its members would emulate Cain in his murderous hatred of his better brother; hence the age of the persecution of the true disciples of Christ by their professed Christian brethren: next, they would imitate Balaam in his prostitution of his sacred office for filthy lucre, and in his attempt to corrupt the church to please the great and powerful: lastly, they would meet their end, in somewhat of a different character, at the eve of the predicted interposition of God; they would assume the attitude of Core, and stand up in opposition to the ministers and authorities ordained of God. The times are altered; and Satan sees that his advantageous ground to oppose the cause of God, and of his holy religion, will not now be to instigate his children to persecute, or to prostitute to his

¹ Macknight.

* Rom. i.

purpose the divine institutions of the church, but to rouse the world, and arm it against them. Let us bear in mind this is one of the last features of the apostasy in Christian nations.

St. Jude, like St. Peter, goes on to describe this rising apostasy, by the character of its then members :—

14. “ These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead,¹ plucked up by the roots. Raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

This nearly resembles St. Peter’s description of the same persons, and that neither apostle means to confine his views to the members of the apostasy in that day, is evident from the following quotation, which we have often adverted to before, and which places before us the corrupters of the last day, those that “ perish in the gain-saying of Core.”

14. “ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,”—“ with his holy myriads, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

St. Jude further characterizes them :—

“ These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts.”

¹ “ Prorsus emortuæ, nam δις, τρις, indicat interdum omnino, penitus.”
—1 Thess. ii. 18.—SCHLEUSNER.

Discontented with their condition in life, blaming others, and brooking no restraint; at the same time, also, they boast and threaten, and, when occasion serves, can seduce by flatteries:—

“ And their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.”

17. “ But, beloved, remember ye the words that were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be workers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts: these are they who separate themselves, sensual,”—“ or, “ mere natural or animal men,”—“ having not the Spirit.”

Does not this represent the apostasy, in its last stage, as in a state of separation from the church?—a separation which the Spirit of God, the source of all ministerial grace and authority, will not sanction? They are mere natural men; they have no church authority amongst them, whatever they may pretend to.

One only passage remains to be quoted from the apostolical epistles, which takes a very similar view of the Christian’s expectations concerning a second advent to what we have seen in Scriptures already examined:—

1 John, iii. 1, 2, 3. “ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is: and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

The love of God, as at present manifested to his people, the apostle urges, calls for the most lively gratitude and admiration. To be made the children of God by adoption and grace—to receive the Spirit of adoption

—to have the Spirit of God bearing witness with, or to, our spirit that we are the children of God,—this is a gift wonderful indeed; and though unknown, unacknowledged by the world, is the present possession and secret consolation of the people of God.

But they have higher expectations still, connected with the Saviour's appearing. They expect to behold him manifested in glory; and they expect to be made like him, and to appear with him in glory. Agreeably with those wonderful expressions in the prayer of our Lord, "And the glory that thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." The world knew not "the only begotten of the Father," when he appeared on earth full of grace and truth; for the same reason, St. John tells us, it knows not the adopted children of God dwelling among them, though they, too, reflect something of the grace and truth of the Redeemer. But as he must be manifested so that every eye shall see him, so will there be also a "manifestation" to the world "of the sons of God," in that—now unknown—glory which is to be brought to them at the coming of Christ; who, amidst all his saints, is to appear as "the first-born among many brethren." This is the hope of the spiritual Christian, and as surely as this hope glows in his soul, so surely does it lead to a keen sense of the evil of sin, and of the defilement of corrupt affections; so surely does it animate the renewed mind to aspire after greater conformity to Christ, to cleanse itself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Such are the effects of that doctrine which human wisdom has pronounced to be a doctrine of licentiousness!!

CHAPTER III.

THE REVELATION.

WE now come to the last in order of the books of the sacred volume, the Revelation of St. John, which, from its nature and subjects, must require our very particular attention.

Sir Isaac Newton has remarkably expressed himself, speaking of a particular era predicted in the Revelation: "The event will prove the Apocalypse; and this prophecy, thus proved and understood, will open the old prophets, and altogether will make known the true religion, and re-establish it. For he that will understand the old prophets must begin with this; but the time is not yet come for understanding them perfectly, because the main revolution in them is not yet come to pass. *In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he has declared to his servants, the prophets; and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever.** There is already so much of the prophecy fulfilled, that as many as will take pains in this study may see sufficient instances of God's providence; but *then* the signal revolutions predicted by all the holy prophets will, at once, turn men's eyes upon considering the predictions, and plainly interpret them. Till then, we must content ourselves with interpreting what has already been fulfilled."

* Rev. x. 7; xi. 15.

Sir Isaac Newton further remarks: " Among the interpreters of the last age, there is scarce one of note who has not made some discovery worth knowing; and thence I seem to gather that God is about opening these mysteries," &c.

Such were the encouraging observations of one of the wisest of uninspired men, above a century ago: and, certainly, much successful labour has, since that time, been employed upon the Scripture prophecies: wonderful events, too, have happened in the history of mankind — events which, though their sudden and dazzling brightness confused, at first, the observations of expositors, cannot but afford important lights for discovering the true meaning of prophecy, when calmly viewed in a more settled state.

SECTION I.

The Revelation, Chapter i. 5—8.

IN St. John's preface to the Apocalypse, the second advent of Christ is plainly recognised as the grand expectation of the church, and as the final object of all prophecy. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he denominates him " the faithful Witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth."

" Unto him," he says, " that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

The language of preceding prophecies affords an easy solution to all this. Jesus is "the faithful witness," because he is the revealer of the mind of God, and is the great organ of revelation to his church. How he is the "first-begotten of the dead," has been explained on 1 Cor. xv.; to which we may add St. Paul's declaration, Rom. viii. 39; "Those whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." This conformity is not manifested nor completed, till the morning of the resurrection. Believers, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, still "wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body." It is not till then that they "bear the image of the heavenly:" but at that happy epocha they see him as he is, and are like him." This is "*the manifestation of the Sons of God*," for which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth." We perceive, then, why the Redeemer is called "the first-begotten"—the elder Brother "of the dead."

"The Prince of the kings of the earth." This might possibly apply to Christ, as the Lord of Providence; but we have learned the fact, that he comes at the resurrection of the just, to take in his own person the kingdom under the whole heavens.

The business of his first and second advent is next contrasted, after the manners of the ancient prophecies. At the first he comes to purchase his universal church; at the last he comes to give them the promised kingdom, and to recover a lost world.

"Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"—"and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." He appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself—and to them that

look for him, he will appear a second time, without sin unto salvation." The manifestation of the ransomed people of God, in the character of his kings and priests, certainly takes not place till they appear as "the children of the resurrection." Then it is, that they come to reign with Christ. And we remark, that the effect of his atonement, in its present application, at least, and the gift of the kingdom, are co-extensive. All, therefore, of the remnant according to the election of grace, washed from their sins in his blood, will come to reign with him in his glorious kingdom. "Such honour have all his saints." "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him."* "All flesh," said an ancient prophet, "shall see the glory of Jehovah." Our Lord's own words also illustrate: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth also to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Two parties are described as chiefly affected by his appearing; "those that pierced him," and "all the kindreds of the nations." The former are clearly the Israelitish nation. The ancient prophet describes them as "looking on him whom they pierced;" and at the same time as mourning for him in true penitence of heart. His coming is, to them that pierced him then, a blessing.¹ And to this agree the words of our Lord to this same people, speaking of his second coming:

* Verse 7.

¹ "By such a miraculous apparition of Christ from heaven as St. Paul converted. And I hope it is no *heresie* to think that the whole nation of the Jews, (those zealots against Christ,) may be converted by as strange a means as was that one zealot of their nation." — MEDE.

See also Mr. Piere.

“ Verily I say to you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” But, “ the kindreds of the nations wail because of him.” And so in our Lord’s prophecy, “ and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with power and great glory.” How clearly does this point out to us the apostate nations of the professed Christian world; and prophecy has fully informed us, that these nations have indeed, generally, cause to wail at the Redeemer’s coming.

SECTION II.

Some Remarks on the Epistles to the Seven Churches, particularly Chapter ii. 25, &c.; and iii. 20.

IN the first vision of the revelation, contained in the second and third chapters, we have several things to note, as intimating the second advent of our Lord, and the events which are then to take place:—

10. “ I was in the Spirit,” says the apostle, “ on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. 11. What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches that are in Asia.” 12. “ And I turned to see the voice of him that spake with me: and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks,” [or, “ stands for lamps.”] 13. And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were

as a flame of fire. 15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength."

This is clearly a symbolical representation of the GREAT REDEEMER, as the Head of his church, in the station that he holds as our great High Priest, in the tabernacle above. His robes, as well as his situation amid the candlesticks, bespeak the priestly character; for there is an evident allusion to the Jewish tabernacle: that was a pattern of things in heaven. His robes, however, seem to differ from those of the Levitical priesthood: he is a priest of a different order. The hoary head in the symbol denotes, we may suppose, the maturity of wisdom;—the eye, "like flame," the penetrating view of Him, who discerneth the secrets of all hearts; "the feet like burning brass," I conceive,* are a symbol of the vengeance he is one day to execute, when in his fury he shall trample the enemies of God beneath his feet.

" After the order of Melchisedeck
Is my Lord at thy right hand;
Kings hath He smitten in the day of his wrath," &c.

The comparison of the sound of his voice to many waters will also remind us of the language of ancient prophecy, and is generally a symbol of judgment. The sharp two-edged sword, represented as proceeding from his mouth, also denotes the sentence of the judge and avenger. The stars he holds in his hands, and the candlesticks, are explained below:—

* Compare Chap. ii. 18, &c.

20. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches."

The impression which the appearance of this vision had upon St. John, will not fail to remind us of the effects produced upon the animal frame of the prophet Daniel, in the same circumstances:—

17. "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last. 18. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

"I am the first and the last," surely asserts his absolute Deity: compare but the eighth verse, "I am Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." "Lord" is unquestionably a title of Christ, which, in the general language of the New Testament, distinguishes him from God the Father. "To us there is one God, even the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ." And I conceive it is *His* throne—the seat of the divine Majesty, as occupied by THE SON OF MAN, which is spoken of in the fourth verse—"even of Jesus Christ, to whom the Spirit is given without measure:" who hath overcome, and is set down with his FATHER upon his throne; "the Head of all things to his church."

He plainly tells the beloved disciple he is the same whom he once knew upon earth, and whom he knew to have died and risen again. He tells him that it is himself who reigns in the invisible world, and administers the destinies of mankind. St. Paul's language will illustrate this gracious address of our glorified

Saviour. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."* This is information most consolatory to his church. The state of the dead, and the time and circumstance of their departure thither, are under the control of the merciful Saviour. He has the charge of the intermediate state. Those that sleep in Jesus are present with him, in his safe keeping—"the prisoners of hope."

That the seven epistles to the seven churches of Asia, which compose this first vision in the Revelation, represent the actual state of religion in these respective societies, and denounce their future destinies as churches, seems to be beyond all doubt. But it is equally plain from the general style of the addresses, and from the application accompanying each,—“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,”—that these churches are selected as specimens and examples to the whole catholic church. Each may be considered as forming an historical allegory, representing all churches of a similar character to the end of time, and showing, in its predicted fate, what every church in like circumstances may hope for or expect:† and showing how, in the case of most of them, the individual believer is to maintain his integrity, in the midst of a corrupted society.

We remark, moreover, that each church, in the usual style of prophecy, is addressed in prospect of the coming of Christ, to take account of his servants:

* Romans, xiv. 8.

† Dean Woodhouse.

and even when the prophecy seems to forebode the dissolution of the church, in the taking away of its candlestick, still the faithful *remnant* are summoned against that day.

It has been conjectured, from the addresses to two of these churches, and the events of history so far corroborate the conjecture, that they shall survive every trial, even the oppression of Mahometism, which now rests so heavily upon them, to see the day of Christ. These are Smyrna and Philadelphia. To the first it is said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life:" to the latter, "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

But, whatever may be the warrant for this conclusion, there is a language held to every one of the churches, which assures to the individual that overcometh, a share in the blessings of that day: and the language held to the remnants in some of these churches, especially in those of Thyatira and of Laodicea, is so express and distinct, that it throws considerable light upon our general subject—the business and concerns of the second advent. To the remnant in Thyatira it is said:—

Chap. ii. 25. "But that which ye have, hold fast till I come, and he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and as the vessels of a potter, shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star."

This promise renders it clear, as we have often inferred before, that every faithful follower of Jesus Christ shall, in some sort, participate in the power and

authority of the Redeemer, when he comes to judge the world, and establish his kingdom.

In the second Psalm, it is a grant of God to the Messiah:—

And I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,
And the utmost extremities of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt rule them with a sceptre of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

This the Redeemer has received of his Father, and this honour he bestows on all his saints; on every one "that overcometh." What the "gift of the morning star" may indicate, perhaps we know not as yet. I should conjecture that it applies to the faithful remnants in Thyatira—or in such like churches—that shall be alive at the eve of that glorious day, when the Son of Man is revealed: and that they shall be among "the wise," that shall perceive the signs of their Lord's coming; and, while the world around them is sunk in darkness, and in sleep, so that that day shall come upon them unawares; these faithful servants, watching for their Lord, shall perceive the day dawn; "the day-star shall arise on their hearts;" a harbinger of "the Sun of righteousness," that shall arise on them "with healing in his wings." "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

What is said to the remnant of Laodicea is nearly equivalent:—

Chap. iii. 20. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

This language is illustrated by the general precepts

respecting watching for the coming of Christ, as servants for their master's returning from the wedding-feast. The parable of the twelve virgins will also illustrate it. The stress is laid on the servants' being ready, and immediately prepared when the Master comes: not to hear the knock, betokens the slothful unawakened servant that will be rejected. It follows:—

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me upon my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father upon his throne.”

Both these promises are important in the view of our subject, inasmuch as they clearly ascertain the fact, that the promise of the kingdom, in its utmost glories, belongs to *all* the faithful people of God, and is not, as some have supposed, the peculiar portion of holy martyrs, or of those who in this life have been called to sustain particular sufferings and losses for Christ's sake.

I have selected these blessings pronounced on the faithful, in these two churches, as most illustrative of our subject. But “to him that overcometh,” in the address to each of the churches, will be found a promise that refers to his happy condition, when the kingdom of God shall fully come.

7. “I will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

11. He “shall not be hurt by the second death.” 17. “He shall eat of the hidden manna,” &c.

Chap. iii. 5. “The same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

12. “Him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,

and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

SECTION III.

The Opening of the Main Vision of the Revelation.

THE second vision of the Revelation, which may be considered, whatever new scenes are introduced, as lasting to the end of the book, commences in the fourth chapter. As every thing in this vision has a reference, direct or indirect, to the coming of Christ, in his kingdom, and as it details, in regular series, the course of events in the history of mankind, that will lead at length to the development of this glorious era, we must not entirely omit any part of it, but at least so far note those parts of the prophecy which belong not immediately to our subject, as to keep in view the connexion of the whole.

Invited, in the vision, to ascend the heavens, the prophet seems to see the appearance of a kingly or imperial throne. The robes of him that sits thereon, compared to the brightness of precious stones, rather than to an earthly dye, are clearly represented as being of the royal purple. They "were to look upon like jasper and a sardine stone"—like to that jasper which is of the colour of sardine stone, or carnelian.* "The rainbow like an emerald," whatever the particular colour

* Ἡ ἱασπς — κρυστὴ ἢ πορφύρεα. See SCHLEUSNER.

denotes, is a sign of covenanted mercies to the church. "He that sitteth on the throne," I can have no doubt, is an emblem of our exalted Saviour, sitting on the throne of providence, having all power in heaven and in earth given into his hands. "The lamb that was slain," which seems in this vision to be shown as distinct from the king on the throne, is certainly, indeed, an emblem of the Saviour; and this at first view may destroy the notion, that the same person can be represented by the emblem of the king. But, in my view, it is far less incongruous with the symbolical language of Scripture, to suppose two symbols of the same person in his two different capacities, than to suppose any similitude whatever of the absolute Deity of the Father. The King, therefore, is HE that hath overcome, and is set down with the invisible Godhead upon his throne.*¹

The emblem of the four and twenty elders, who sit around the chief throne, is easily deciphered. Their white robes are symbolical of priesthood; their crowns, of the kingly office. Now, it was the acknowledgment of the redeemed, (chap. i. ver. 5, 6,) that Christ had not only loved them, and "washed them from their sins in his own

* Compare on Daniel, chap. vii.

¹ "This representation has a close resemblance to what it pleases the Holy Spirit to display, at other times, of the majesty of Jehovah. Isaiah, vi.; Ezekiel, i. 2, 6. His ineffable majesty can only be represented

by sensible and earthly images."

—DEAN WOODHOUSE.

'If we consult the passages here referred to, we shall have no doubt that it is the person of the SON, and not of the FATHER, that was manifested to these prophets.

blood," but that he had also made them "*kings and priests* unto God and his Father." Connect with this the promise to the faithful, (chap. iii. 21,)—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me upon my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne:" and the emblem is clearly significant of the church triumphant in heaven.

In the seven lamps burning before the throne—emblematical of the Spirit in his sevenfold gifts, or of the completeness of that unction that flows from the exalted Saviour upon all his churches—and also, in the sea or laver of glass like unto crystal, we are still reminded of the Jewish tabernacle, or rather of that heavenly tabernacle, and of that throne of grace, which the worldly sanctuary represented.

We have here, too, in the same situation which their golden models occupied in the Jewish tabernacle, the cherubim of glory,—“in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne.” That the “four beasts,” or as we should render the term, the four “living creatures,” in this vision, are the same emblems as the cherubim and seraphim in the visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah, will be manifest from a comparison of these visions, especially that of the last mentioned prophet; to the exposition of which I refer.

What these cherubic beings symbolize, has not been uniformly agreed upon by commentators: but they cannot be emblems of the Divine Being, or of his attributes, as has been already remarked; because they appear as worshippers of him that sitteth on the throne: their perpetual employment, indeed, is worship: “they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come!” They are

emblems, therefore, of some blessed ministering spirits, who serve in the presence of the manifested glory of Jehovah. But yet they are not angels, because they are plainly distinguished from them below: "And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the *beasts*, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," &c. *

And as they cannot be angels, so, by the representation of the vision before us, they cannot be the powers of nature personified, nor inferior creatures, as distinct from men and angels; for it immediately follows: "And every creature which is in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!" †

As, therefore, neither God, nor his holy angels, nor the powers of nature, nor inferior animals, are denoted by these "living creatures," they must symbolize the redeemed themselves, or some part of them. And this, too, is clear from what follows.

In the eighth verse of the fifth chapter, we find these cherubic beings join in the thanksgiving of the elders to the Lamb; nay, they lead the song, and express the same expectation of reigning upon the earth, as he begins to unfold the volume of prophecy: "And when he had taken the book, the four *beasts*, — or *living creatures*, — and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new

song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; *and we shall reign on the earth.*" We are, therefore, warranted to conclude that "the cherubim," as well as the crowned "elders," are symbols of the church triumphant, which is one day to be manifested on earth, and with Christ to take the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven. What are the different parts of this blessed company, and what their several functions, as represented by these different emblems, perhaps we cannot know till the day shall reveal it; but these cherubim seem to be stationed nearer to the throne and to the Lamb than even the crowned elders!

I have already expressed my notion of the emblem of "the Lamb as it had been slain;" that it is but another symbol for him who sits as a king upon the throne: accordingly, he is seen "in the midst of the throne," as well as in the midst of the cherubim and angels. In short, it is an emblem of something now in God, that is to say, of the manhood taken into God — of that human nature which God the Son (who personally sat on the throne) had taken upon himself, in order to redeem mankind, and to accomplish the ultimate purposes of creation. He, according to the flesh, was "the shoot from the root of David," "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," Judah's future victorious Chief. He is represented in the vision as prevailing, by his worthiness, to have the book of futurity unfolded, and its contents revealed for the instruction of his redeemed people. Hence the title of this closing book of Scripture, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which

God gave unto him, to show to his servants things that must shortly come to pass ; and he sent and signified"—or, "made it known in signs and symbols—by his angel unto his servant John."

I agree with those expositors¹ who consider the subsequent vision as divided into distinct portions, in the following manner :—

First, into seven greater divisions, by the opening of SEVEN SEALS, that seem to disclose in order the volume or roll of destiny :

Next, the last of these seals is divided into seven other divisions, marked by the sounding of SEVEN TRUMPETS :

Lastly, the seventh of these trumpets is divided into seven new divisions, by the pouring out of SEVEN VIALS, which finish the wrath of God, and lead immediately to the establishment of the promised kingdom.

Such is the order of the prophetic narrative of the Revelation, upon which we must keep our eye continually fixed. Various other scenes and symbols are introduced in the vision, to illustrate various mysteries in the dealings of God with his church, and in the permitted hostility of the rulers of the darkness of this world ; but these are to be considered in the nature of *episodes* or *interludes*.

To understand the vision, we must keep constantly in view the progress of the main train of events, marked by the opening SEALS, the sounded TRUMPETS, and the VIALS of wrath poured forth. And all these symbols will be found to signify, in order, various remarkable epochas, with their subsequent eras, in the future history of mankind ; all leading, in their successive series, to the deve-

¹ Bishop Newton.

lopment of the great day of Almighty God: and the history of the world, as far as it goes, will be our surest guide to the interpretation of these prophecies.

Here, then, let us recall to our recollection the historical prophecies of Daniel. The grand outline of prophetic history there afforded us, will serve to circumscribe our researches, and to confine our inquiries in the proper line of events.

It was revealed to this prophet, in different visions and by different symbols, that four great empires, in their rise and fall, should govern the destinies of the world, as those destinies affected, more or less, the church of God upon earth. Four empires were to bear rule over the civilized world. The fourth was to be of a peculiar description, and to continue, in some form or other, till the time of the end,—so that this fourth empire should only give place to the erection of the kingdom of God upon earth. This made the symbols of the fourth kingdom an object of particular inquiry to the prophet; and, accordingly, it will be seen, by adverting to that part of the present work, that many particulars respecting this last earthly empire, and concerning the history of the world in the latter days, were partially opened to the prophet Daniel, and is written for our information, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

This fourth kingdom, as we have seen, has proved to be the Roman empire. This empire was in full dominion, and had nearly reached its utmost extent, when John saw the vision of the Apocalypse. The kingdom represented, in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, by the “legs of iron,” and in Daniel’s corresponding vision, by the “fourth beast, dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly,” with its great “iron teeth,” was now explained by the

event. The Roman empire had, indeed, according to the prophecy, devoured the whole earth, "breaking in pieces and stamping the residue with its feet."

So much of this vision had been explained by the events of history. What follows — the division of this empire, represented by the "toes, part of iron and part of clay," in the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and by "the ten horns," or rather, eleven horns of the fourth beast, in the prophet's vision, had not yet taken place: the Roman empire was yet entire and unbroken. Its strength was unimpaired in the age of St. John: all was "iron" in its composition. And though it had, for some years, been nearly stationary as to its conquests, yet, as we have observed before, they had not been pushed to their utmost extent when John saw this vision, the date of which, according to the most ancient writers, and the best part of the moderns, is the year of our Lord ninety-six.

The situation of the world, at this period, may be easily understood by the perusal of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. The real narrative of his history begins not quite so soon as A. D. 96; but his prefatory remarks carry him back to take up the train of events at this very year, in order to the opening of the great subject of his work, "the decline and fall" of the Empire. Prophecy corrects, indeed, his notion respecting "the *fall*" of the empire. The empire is not fallen; it is only "divided,"—it "is not, and yet is." The modern states of Europe that have sprung out of Roman civilization, are, in the view of the Spirit of prophecy, a continuation of the same empire, divided, indeed, but yet not completely severed, having still some bonds of union, which, though sometimes weak, and

never perfect or lasting, still keep the members of the empire together, and draw a line of distinction between it and the other nations of the earth.

Correcting this view of the historian, his history — perhaps in itself the most important history that was ever written, if its impurities, as well as its infidel principles, did not forbid its being generally recommended, connecting, as it does, the ancient history of mankind with the present times, is of especial importance, as far as it goes, in explaining the prophecy of the Revelation. Mr. Gibbon, in the distribution of the great events of history, in his marking out the *grand epochas* and their connected *eras*, will be found, with wonderful exactness, to tread in the steps of prophecy; so much so, indeed, that the composition of such a history, at such a time, and by such a man, appears as providential. The reader, for the explanation of the “seals” and “trumpets” of the Revelation, will need no other expositor than the infidel historian. With the completion of the sixth trumpet, his narrative in reality ends; and our course afterwards becomes more intricate and perplexed; not so much on account of the loss of our guide, but because we are approaching nearer the unfinished periods of our own times, when we cannot so well weigh the importance of events and revolutions by their lasting consequences on the fate of the church or of mankind: when we cannot so well explain how facts and characters, which appear from their nearness and close connexion with ourselves, to be so great and so important, will appear, when they are seen on the page of general history; when their true consequence is known in their bearings on subsequent events, and on the future changes to take place in the state of nations.

SECTION IV.

The First Seal.

COMMENTATORS differ more about the explanation of the first seal than almost any other; but, as by almost common consent (till very recently at least), the other "seals" and "trumpets," symbolize some great political events in the history of Rome and of mankind; and as an event is immediately found on the page of history to explain the symbol, I cannot for a moment hesitate to say, that the first seal symbolizes a political event as well as the rest.*

Placing ourselves in the year ninety-six, or, which is the same thing, opening "Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall," we find ourselves at the eve of a very important epocha; the exaltation of Trajan, which exactly corresponds with the first symbol:—

Chap. vi. 2. "I saw," says the apostle, "and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given to him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer:"—

No set of symbols can be more easily deciphered. The white horse, from its use in ancient times, denoted royal majesty; at least military greatness. To "have a bow," and to "receive a crown," what else can it denote but the raising of a warrior to the imperial

* Bengelius.

dignity? And that warrior exerts his supreme power over the state, to extend his conquests. "He goes forth conquering, and to conquer." This is exactly the character of the great event of the times, which in its consequences had a very considerable and lasting effect upon the state of that world in which the church of Christ, for an appointed time, must sojourn. "On the eighteenth day of September Domitian was murdered, and succeeded by Nerva, a man of a peaceful and feeble character, whose short reign, of only one year, four months, and nine days, was only important in the history of Rome, and of mankind, for one event. His own character, and the turbulence of the times, induced Nerva to select for his colleague and successor to the empire, a person of a military character." This he did about three months previous to his death, and his choice fell on Trajan, whose character and actions clearly fulfilled the prophecy.

"The principal conquests," observes Mr. Gibbon, "of the Romans, were achieved under the republic." "Augustus relinquished the ambition of conquest." "His moderate system was adopted by his successors." "Such were the maxims of imperial polity from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general.¹ The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head."

The account of the extensive conquests of this prince, the reader may learn from the page of Gibbon. It will

¹ "Imperator simul et commilito," is the expression of TACITUS.

be sufficient to observe here, that he extended the bounds of the Roman empire to the utmost limits they ever reached.¹ After this epocha, the power of the empire remained stationary for some years, and then began to decline. The *cause* of that decline was the next grand revolution in the affairs of the world. And this, we shall find, was symbolized by the second seal.

SECTION V.

The Second Seal, Verse 4.

“There went forth another horse that was red, and it was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”

THE symbols here are, also, sufficiently distinct. The “red horse,” the commission given to its rider; the great sword—the sword of the executioner, are all sufficiently plain.

In perusing the narrative of our historian, in search of an event that will explain this symbol, we find that Trajan, the leading character of the former period, for periods and eras of history, and not the reigns of individual princes, will be found to be designated by the seals and trumpets, died A.D. 117, and was succeeded by Hadrian. He governed the empire in peace till his

¹ “Romani Imperii, quod, post longè lateque diffudit.”—EUTROPIUS.
Augustum, defensum magis fuerat
quam nobiliter ampliatur, fines

death, in 137, when he was succeeded by Antoninus Pius. But neither in this prince, nor in the second Antony, who succeeded him in 161 and reigned till 180, do we find any resemblance to the symbol in the prophetic vision before us, nor any great change or revolution in the world, which one might have expected to become the theme of prophecy. Gibbon has distinctly marked off these reigns as belonging to one era, when he observes:—"During a happy period, the public administration was conducted by the virtues and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonies."

But next follows, as we read the history in its regular course, an epocha indeed, and an epocha of that importance, that Mr. Gibbon dates from it the decline and fall of this mighty empire. This was the accession of the tyrant Commodus, the son of Marcus Antoninus, at the death of that prince, A. D. 180. Gibbon thinks that "Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger, born with an insatiable thirst of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the most inhuman actions;" but he owns, "His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul." After stating the extent of his cruelties, he adds:—"When Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorse."

For particular transactions, I refer to the narrative of Mr. Gibbon. The reader will there find fully explained what is intended by the "red horse" and "great sword." These emblems would, indeed, have symbolized any other bloody tyrant in any other age of the world; but, following the train of history from the time when St. John saw the vision, Commodus could not well have been

passed over; and the prophecy is applied, with great exactness, to his reign.

Besides, *the effects* attributed to his bloody administration are another note whereby we learn to apply the prophecy to Commodus. It is not the reign of every cruel tyrant that could produce the consequences here described, "to take peace from the earth," and "that they might slay one another with the sword." With many tyrants the evil has perished with themselves, or the virtues of a successor have healed the wounds of his bleeding country. This was remarkably the case when the adoptive father of Trajan received the empire after the death of the almost equally cruel Domitian. But mark the consequences of the excesses of Commodus on the welfare of that world, the government of which he had received in so peaceful a state. His maleadministration was capable, from the circumstances in which it occurred, of producing a new era in the history of mankind, and plunged the Roman empire into endless scenes of civil wars and tumults. Mr. Gibbon particularly pronounces "the licentious fury of the Pretorian guards," which now first discovered itself, to be the first symptom and cause of the decline of the empire. Of the event of the reign of Commodus, he remarks, in another place, "A revolution which will ever be remembered, and *is still felt by the nations of the earth.*"

SECTION VI.

The Third Seal.

THE third seal is as clearly explained from history as the former: —

5. "I looked, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Now, mark on the page of history the personal character and the character of the administration of the successful general, who put an end to the civil wars which followed the death of Commodus. This general was Severus, "a native of Africa." Perhaps, the whole compass of history could not supply a character, the peculiar features of which are so exactly delineated by the symbols before us, as that of the emperor Severus, whose administration, in some measure, restored tranquillity to the world, and yet, in its consequences, marks another era in the fall of Rome.

He was a soldier like Trajan, and a tyrant like Commodus; but both his valour and his tyranny were of a different sort: so that the "black horse" and "the balance for his sceptre" are as emblematical of his reign as "the white horse," "the bow, and the crown," were of the administration of Trajan, and the "red horse" and "great sword" of that of Commodus.

His "severity," under the pretension of "rigid justice," remarked by Mr. Gibbon, sufficiently explains the beam of the balance he held in his hand. "He never did an act of humanity, or forgave a fault."¹

After mentioning the execution of forty senators, with all their wives, children, and dependants, the historian observes, "Such rigid justice, for so he termed it, was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of

¹ "Parcus admodum fuit natura sævus."

ensuring peace to the people or stability to the prince; and he condescended slightly to remark, that, to be mild, it was necessary he should first be cruel." "However cruel Severus may appear in his punishments and in his revenge, many have endeavoured to exculpate him, and observed there was need of severity in an empire whose morals were so corrupted, and where no less than three thousand persons were accused of adultery during the space of seventeen years." Gibbon again remarks:—"The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Posterity, who felt the fatal effects of his maxims and example, justly considered him as the *principal author* of the decline of the Roman empire."

Severus expired at York, A. D. 211, in the eighteenth year of his reign. A short period of eleven years of unsettled times intervenes, when Alexander Severus restores both the name and the times of the first Severus, under whom the empire enjoys an auspicious calm of thirteen years, which reign (from what follows) is included in this same period of prophecy.

The voice which St. John hears proclaiming a measure of wheat for a penny, &c., is also illustrated by the history of these times. The language of the prophecy clearly implies a scarcity of these necessities of life, and some public regulations of government in consequence. In the authors quoted by Bishop Newton, and especially in the history of Gibbon, we shall find that this was truly an age of *fiscal* regulations: many laws were made for regulating the price of the chief articles of subsistence, and for providing them for the consumption of the people

by public authority; and it is remarkable, that the eloquent historian fixes upon this era as a proper place for a digression on the finances of the Roman empire.¹

SECTION VII.

The Fourth Seal.

THE opening of the fourth seal discloses a new set of emblems; and we shall find the era that succeeded to the reigns of the Severuses, as exactly answering to these emblems, as those we have already examined:—

Chap. vi. 7. “And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed after him, and power was given unto them,”—or, “unto him,”—“over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death,”—or, “pestilence,”—“and with the beasts of the earth.”

A season of particular mortality, from the causes mentioned, must strike every one, as the meaning of these symbols. To the reader of history it may, perhaps, occur, that the events of many periods will agree with the picture of the destruction of the human species here given. But yet it may be justly questioned, whether any period in the history of mankind so particularly agrees with this terrific picture of the march of death as the times that immediately succeeded the reign of Alexander

¹ Joseph Mede and Bishop Newton have applied this seal to the same historical events.

Severus. He was murdered A. D. 235, and succeeded by the "monster Maximin," whose character and administration, as may be read in the page of Gibbon, led the way to these calamitous times foreboded in the vision. He was murdered A. D. 238. "In the space of a few months six princes are cut off with the sword," — "The Persians invade the east," — "The Barbarians" "boldly attack the provinces of a declining monarchy," — "Gordian murdered 244 — Philip meets the same fate 248." "From this time to the death of Gallienus — 268 — there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune: during that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution."

Very remarkable are Mr. Gibbon's general observations on this period of history: — "Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictions, or exaggerations. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes, however, must have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged, without interruption, in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time, five thousand persons died daily in

Rome, and many towns that had escaped the hands of barbarism were entirely depopulated. We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use, perhaps, in the melancholy calculation of human calamities; an exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the contribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy, had been equal to the whole number of claimants from fourteen to eighty years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus. Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species." An account of the multiplying of wild beasts at this calamitous season, may also be seen in the authors quoted by Bishop Newton.

The end of this disastrous season, as we learn from Gibbon, may be thus described:—"Gallienus died in the year 268. After this event, within a period of about thirty years, a series of great princes, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domestic enemies of the state, and re-established, with military discipline, the strength of the frontiers, and deserved the glorious titles of restorers of the Roman world."¹

¹ Here again we have the suffrage of Mede and Bishop Newton.

SECTION VIII.

The Fifth Seal.

Chap. vi. 9. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw, under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled!"

THE symbols of this seal, like the rest, we shall naturally suppose, are prophetical, and the purport of the prophecy clearly appears in the history of the times. Under Diocletian, as every reader will know, the most violent of all the persecutions that the church had yet endured broke out, and threatened, in the views of men, the utter extirpation of the Christian name. The ten years' persecution under Diocletian, therefore, history tells us, fulfilled the prophecy of this seal. This was the grand era of martyrs. But the language of the prophecy is important as it opens to us a scene in the invisible world, applicable to all that suffer for Christ's sake, and confess his name before men. The souls of the martyrs are seen beneath the altar: this declares their state to be that of those who are sanctified by the death of Christ, and obtain remission of sins through his blood.

We have no occasion to impute to these holy souls the sentiment of revenge, because of their cry for justice;

for the symbolical representation may be equally well deciphered as representing God's view of their state and injuries; — “The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.” The “white robe” denotes the gift of that perfect purity in which they are to be presented before God; but they are bid to rest for a little while, till the number of their fellow sufferers is completed. This period of rest, I conceive, refers to their continuing in the departed state till the resurrection of the just. This will be but a little while in comparison of that “eternal weight of glory” that follows. And we have already learned, that it is at the resurrection, when Christ appears the second time, that the judgment of wicked persecutors is to take place, and the general judgment of this fourth empire. So that we perceive, what is said to these holy souls of the martyred saints, implies an answer to their prayer, — A little while you must rest, then you shall awake and see the vengeance of your blood, and of the blood of all your brethren, upon them that dwell on the earth.

SECTION IX.

The Sixth Seal.

THE observations in the close of the former section must be borne in view, in order to our understanding the meaning of the next seal, which is a prophecy of a somewhat different nature from the foregoing seals. Those seals were simple predictions of events to take place in the subsequent history of mankind, and were to receive, in those events, their ultimate and complete

accomplishment. But the sixth seal is a typical prophecy, predicting, indeed, like the foregoing seals, events to follow in the immediate train of historical narrative, but not receiving its ultimate accomplishment in them. These events, thus immediately predicted, are types of greater things to come, but of things somewhat analogous: in the same manner as, in the Old Testament, the fall of the Assyrian monarch, and especially the fall of Babylon, had been rendered by prophecy types of a greater event in distant futurity.

In the seal we are going to consider — from the order of events that precede and follow — I can have no doubt, the revolution of the Roman world, under Constantine, which immediately follows this era of martyrs, is *typically* represented; but its *full* and *ultimate* accomplishment cannot possibly arrive till that season of the martyrs' rest, spoken of above, is over, and they come with their great Redeemer to execute vengeance on the fourth empire: —

12. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind; and the heaven departed like a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

By an earthquake, which throws into confusion, and often alters the positions of the prominent objects on the surface of the earth, is ever designated, in prophetic language, great revolutions and changes in the affairs of men. The face of the material heavens also, as well as the surface of the earth, has afforded the prophetic Spirit a set of images whereby to mark these changes in the state of human society. What the sun, and moon, and the principal stars, in their respective combinations, are on the etherial plain, and what mountains and islands are on the extended surface of the terraqueous globe; such are emperors and kings, with their delegates, and all subordinate rulers, in the history of human affairs, in the narrative of the destinies of mankind.

The symbols of this sixth seal will, therefore, naturally lead us — setting out at the era of persecution foretold in the last seal — to look for some great change in the state of the world, especially among its rulers and leading characters. And a revolution, we accordingly find, did happen a little while after the persecution of Diocletian, that totally changed the polity of the Roman empire. It was the next public event of importance to the era of martyrs, and, by a most extraordinary providence, grew out of it. This revolution was nothing less than the ascendancy of the persecuted religion of Jesus Christ, and its public establishment on the overthrow of all the powers of paganism, which, before, had governed the Roman world.

A moral and political change with respect to the church militant here on earth, so great and so entire, had scarcely ever been witnessed in the history of nations; and, we have reason to suppose, never will again, till that greater revolution comes that finally destroys this

fourth empire, and introduces, *in reality*, the reign of the saints upon earth. Of that greater revolution at the time of the end, this revolution under Constantine, as we have observed, is constituted a type; and, therefore, this prophecy is couched in a language that, from the comparison of other prophecies,* can only belong to the judgment of the great day of Christ's appearing and kingdom: when the dominion of this fourth empire is taken away, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

The revolution under Constantine had, however, in its leading features, something analogous to that far greater event, which will answer the martyrs' prayer in the former vision; and, therefore, the language of prophecy has consecrated it to be a type of "the great day of the wrath of the Lamb." The idolatrous empire of Rome, as it stood opposed to the kingdom of Christ, was, in a manner, destroyed before the followers of the cross.—To revive again, indeed, as subsequent prophecies will show: but at the era now before us, we not only see the enormous fabric of her religion, so great a support to the strength and dignity of Rome's dominion, cast down to the ground; but her dominion is, itself, actually for a season taken away from her. The same prince who made the religion of Christ the established religion of the state, removed the seat of empire from Rome, and the imperial city that had so long reigned over the kings of the earth is reduced to the rank of a provincial city; while Constantinople, a Christian city, receives her forfeited honours.

* Isaiah, xiii. 9, &c.; xxiv. 19, &c.; xxx. 26; xxxiv. 4; I. 2, 3; Joel, ii. 30, &c.; iii. 15; Dan. ii. 34, 35; vii.; Haggai, ii. 6, 7—22, 23.

But, great as was the revolution under Constantine, it was not adequate to the language of prophecy; neither to that used in the prediction before us, nor in the former oracles respecting the fall of the fourth empire. We must, therefore, expect something greater yet to come.

In like manner, the dominion of Christian emperors, prelates, and magistrates, which succeeded to the idolatrous powers of Rome, did not prove to be at all corresponding to the glorious prophecies respecting the reign of the saints upon earth, which ought to have followed the downfall of the fourth empire. There was an analogy, indeed, between the change that actually took place in the government of the civilized world, so as to constitute a type of that glorious event; but that was all. A Christian emperor and Christian rulers succeed to the heathen emperor and his delegates; Christian bishops and pastors take the religious government of the empire, in the room of the pagan priests and augurs, the ministers of the ancient idolatry. The true God, and his ministers in church and state, were acknowledged, and the church enjoyed, by this revolution, for a considerable time, much peace and prosperity. But, after all, it was only what was revealed to Daniel:—"And when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help, but many shall cleave to them by flatteries." This submission of all the world to become Christian, soon discovered itself to be but complimentary. The powers of the empire, though nominally Christian, soon "took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed. Let us burst their bands, and cast away their cords from us." This submission of the world was that predicted in the twenty-second psalm, if I mistake not the translation of that Scripture:—

They shall reflect and turn themselves to Jehovah,
All the extremities of the earth.

They shall worship before him,
All the families of the Gentiles.

For the kingdom is Jehovah's,
And he is the Ruler among the Gentiles.

They ate and they worshipped,
All the rich 'ones' upon earth.

Before him they kneel,
All those that go down to the dust;
But their soul lived not.

A seed shall serve him;
It shall be counted to the Lord for a generation.

They shall come, who shall declare his righteousness
To a people that shall be born, whom he hath prepared.

It soon appeared that "the mystery of iniquity," which had long been working within the church, was about to unfold itself, bringing on the great apostasy, and leading to the revealing of the "*man of sin*," who, according to former oracles, was to direct or influence this same empire to its final opposition to the kingdom of Christ.

SECTION X.

The First Interlude, Chapter vii.

THE sixth seal, we shall bear in mind, has brought us, *typically*, though not in *truth*, to the end of time. In truth and reality, however, it has brought us to a great and very singular revolution in the state of the affairs of men.

The Roman world is become Christian: their emperor is now, to use the language of the angel in Daniel's vision, "the Prince of the host:" and his people, nominally, both by external profession and by the acknowledgment of Providence, "the holy people."*

What shall happen to this nominally Christian world is about to be shown in a new set of symbols, distinguished by the blowing of seven trumpets, which, as we have seen, comprise together the seventh seal: its last trumpet being to be spread out into seven new periods, marked by pouring out of vials, as itself has been spread out into seven trumpets. We are, therefore, arrived at the end of one great division of the series of prophetic events. This is chosen, by the Spirit of prophecy, as a proper place to introduce an episode, or interlude, representing the sealing and the deliverance of the chosen people of God: the accomplishing of the number of his elect, for which the coming of his kingdom waits. To introduce this episode, or interlude, the historic narrative of the prophecy is suspended: the seventh seal is not immediately opened. This intermediate vision which the apostle sees may justly be compared to that described in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel; and, from the known circumstances of Ezekiel's vision, we may illustrate this vouchsafed to St. John.

Ezekiel's vision foreboded the preparation of judgments which were ready to be inflicted upon *an apostate church and people*; but the executors of these judgments are restrained, till a priest from the altar, with a writer's inkhorn by his side, "shall set a mark on the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abomi-

* Chap. vii. 15, and 24.

nations" that be done in the city doomed to destruction.

Exactly similar, only amplified in more magnificent scenery, are the circumstances of the vision before us :—

1. " And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow upon the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads."

It is, therefore, I collect, the intent of this vision, to point out the polluted, apostate church, now become identified with the fourth empire, as the object of future judgment: and surely to this Christian empire we may apply the language of Ezekiel's prophecy respecting faithless Jerusalem! "The iniquity of the house of Israel and of Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness; for they say, 'the Lord hath forsaken the earth,' and, 'the Lord seeth not:' and as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head."

This interposed vision I conceive to be *indefinite* as to time; that is to say, it takes in view the whole continuance of the apostate church and empire, till those judgments fall upon her which shall destroy her. By the suspending of the four winds is symbolized the suspending of the final destruction of the apostate Christian empire, till the time of Christ's appearing, till the whole number of his elect be accomplished; then, will

his kingdom come *indeed*, of which the exaltation of Constantine and his Christian followers to the dominion of the world, was a faint, inglorious type:—

4. “I heard,” says St. John, “the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of Israel.”

This is explained and specified, “out of each of the twelve tribes, twelve thousand.”

“After this, I beheld, and, lo, a great number, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

This scene is capable of a twofold explanation. We may either consider the numbers heard and the people seen as different, or we may consider them as the same. If different, the remnant of the Jews must be represented by the one, and the remnant of the Gentiles by the other. But I am persuaded that they are the same people.¹ It is the number of the sealed altogether, of all the mystic Israel, of “the Israel of God,” of the children of the Jerusalem which is above: their whole number was a hundred and forty-four thousand. The number itself, probably, is mystical, and means only a very large, but still a definite, fixed number. St. John heard their numbers read; but when his eye saw the same happy company before the throne, they seemed to his view, as of course they would, innumerable.

They had white robes, like the souls of the slain beneath the altar, in a former vision; and they are, in fact, the completion of the same happy people, “the holy

¹ Pyle.

church throughout all the world," collected in every age—for the time of these interluded visions, I repeat, is indefinite. They have palms in their hands; this denotes, that the season of their consummation is symbolized—the season until which the martyred souls beneath the altar were told that they must *rest*—is now in the view of the prophetic Spirit. That the hundred and forty and four thousand symbolizes all the redeemed from among men—the number of the elect completed, or soon to be completed—is corroborated by chap. xiv. 1, &c.

10. "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

This ascription of salvation, in the usual style of prophecy, implies, that salvation, final deliverance, and victory, are already, in anticipation, theirs:—

11. "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

The angels, observe, surrounding the throne, and them that stand before it, sing this song of praise and congratulation. But why, it may be asked, do not the cherubim and elders join in this song? I should say, because this glorious company is but another emblem for the same thing as the cherubim with the elders—they both symbolize the church triumphant: the latter are included, at least, in the same mystic hundred and forty and four thousand that have the seal of God upon their forehead; and who these are, is beautifully described to us in the closing part of the vision:—

13. " And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these that are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, or any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Notwithstanding the nominal changes in the world below, tribulation was still the lot of the faithful followers of Christ. The many did but cleave to them with flatteries, and in the midst of a world that called itself Christian, they still were found the objects of hatred and persecution. What had been foretold to Daniel soon began to manifest itself in the professed church: " And some of them of understanding,"—or, " who cause to understand, Christian teachers,"—" shall fall to try them,"—or, " by them,"—" and to purge, and to make white, even to the time of the end." The first very extensive corruption in the church, that deceived them that had not received the love of the truth that they might be saved, was the Arian heresy. This struck at the fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith, and, by immediate and inevitable consequence, overthrew the doctrine of the atonement: by which doctrine we are taught to regard " the church of God" as that " which HE hath purchased with his own blood,"*—the incarnate Eloah himself becoming a Lamb

* Acts, xx. 28.

for a burnt-offering. Thus we find that the faithful, under this first prevailing corruption in the outward church, are distinguished, in the passage before us, as those who held and realized the atonement in the blood of Christ,—“They had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Hence their right and title, and sure possession of everlasting happiness.

SECTION XI.

The Seventh Seal.

WE now return to the *narrative* of the prophecy which we are considering. The last chapter stopped us in our course, and permitted us to ascend the hill of vision, where it disclosed to our view a distant prospect of the land of promise. We must now descend to resume our journey towards it; travelling through the epochas and eras of history, which will lead us at length to the great day of Christ's appearing and kingdom.

Chap. viii. 1. “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

This short silence seems, from the order of events in history, to denote the interval of peace enjoyed by the new modelled empire. “The latter part of the reign of Constantine was peaceful and splendid. Both Eusebius and Lactantius celebrate the peace and tranquillity at that period enjoyed throughout the world. Daubuz observes, that some medals of Constantine are still preserved, with the head of the emperor on one side and

this inscription, CONSTANTINUS AUG.; and on the reverse, BEATA TRANQUILLITAS.”¹

“ 2. And I saw the seven angels that stood before God, and to them was given seven trumpets. And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it up with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand; and the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake; and the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.”

We are still admonished that the imagery of the vision is similar to that of the Jewish sanctuary. The throne of the Most High is the mercy-seat. The altar, the angel with the censer, the incense, and the golden altar, are all emblems of the propitiation through the sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ. The prayers of all saints, presented with the memorial of that acceptable sacrifice, appears to me, like the cry of the martyrs in a former vision, to represent the prayer of the universal church for the coming of the day of Christ. There is a voice that comes up before his throne, as our Lord has taught us, from his injured people continually: “ And shall not God avenge his own elect that cry unto him day and night?” The symbolical act of casting fire from the altar upon the earth, and the effects produced, seems intended to represent, that the judgments to be poured out upon the Christian world, are to avenge the

¹ Bishop Newton.

cause of God's covenant, the corruptions of the times, and the oppression of his servants. We are now to attend to these judgments, which the angels, with their trumpets, are to announce in order.

SECTION XII.

The First Trumpet.

7. "And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail, and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

THE next great event that produced important changes in the Roman world, was the invasion of the Goths and other barbarians. Their point of attack from the north, their multitude, and the destruction that they made by fire and sword, in the fairest provinces of the empire, well answer to the symbols of the prophecy. It is, indeed, a singular coincidence that both poets and historians should see something in the irruptions of these barbarians on the civilized world that suggested to them the same metaphors. Claudian compares them to a storm of hail;¹ and the infidel historian who is our chief guide to the interpretation of these prophecies, more than once employs the same metaphor to illustrate their devastations; and I think I discover, in the page of Gibbon, the meaning of the prophecy, when it designates "the trees" and "green grass" as suffering the greatest injury from this desolating storm: for it will appear, from his narrative of the invasions of the Goths under

¹ Claudian de Bello Getico, ver. 173.—DAUBUZ.

their king ALARIC, that he has continually occasion to take notice of the "richness," "the fertility," "the umbrageous beauty," of the country that lay in the line of his destructive march. These are some of his expressions: "He (the emperor Valens, in the year 379,) was informed that the north was agitated by a *furious tempest*." This was the conflict of the barbarian nations among themselves, that pushed the Goths, who were situated nearest its boundary, into the provinces of the empire.

It is from this reign that the same historian dates the "disastrous period of the *fall*," in distinction from that of "the *decline* of the Roman empire:" so that here again his distribution of epochas and eras agrees exactly with the predictions of prophecy.

He computes the first emigration of barbarians, "reserved to subvert the foundation of Rome," at "near a million of souls." "Exasperated by hunger and the oppression of the Roman governors," "war is resolved on," "the banners of the nation are displayed, and the air resounded with the harsh and mournful sound of the barbarian trumpet;"—"the crimes of the governors are expiated by the ruin of the peaceful husbandmen of Thrace, the conflagration of their villages, and the massacre or captivity of their innocent families." He describes them as "encamped in the *spacious* and *fertile meadows* near the most southern of the six mouths of the Danube." The Visigoths, a part of these barbarians, he describes as "satiating their hunger and revenge by the repeated devastations of the *fruitful country*, which extends above three hundred miles, from the banks of the Danube to the Straits of the Hellespont." After mentioning the killing of the emperor and two-thirds of his army, the historian says, "The tide of the Gothic in-

undation rolled from the walls of Hadrianople to the suburbs of Constantinople." "Laden with the spoil of the wealthy suburbs and the adjacent country," they "slowly move from the Bosphorus to the mountains which formed the western boundaries of Thrace." "The important pass of Succus is betrayed, and they spread themselves over the face of a *fertile and cultivated country*, as far as the confines of Italy and the Adriatic sea." The Goths prudently declined the attack of fortified places: it was a saying of their king, "He was at peace with stone walls."

By the wise administration of Theodosius, who reigned from the year 379 to 395, these calamities are checked from proceeding further for the present. But after the death of that prince, the historian has again to mark the ravages of the Gothic nations, "from the *woody* shores of Dalmatia to the walls of Constantinople;" and, again, he mentions "the deep and bloody traces of their march in the *fertile fields* of Phocis and Bœotia,"—"Athens submits to Alaric"—Attica "blasted by his baneful presence." And again, in very remarkable language, "The *woody* and mountainous country of Arcadia, the fabulous residence of *Pan* and the *Dryads*, became the scene of a long and doubtful conflict." Again, "The fame, the beauty, the wealth of Italy," tempts him: he invades this country,* "spreads desolation over the *fruitful face* of Tuscany."

Gibbon speaks of another invasion of these northern barbarians, which happened about the same period:—"The dark cloud which was collected along the coast of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the

* A. D. 400—403.

Upper Danube." These barbarians were the *Vandals*, the *Suevi*, and the *Burgundians*, and the *Alani*. These nations never afterwards retreated, but seized upon the provinces beyond the Alps. Again, the language of the historian is illustrative of the prophecy:—"While the peace of Germany was secured, the banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tyber, with elegant houses and well cultivated farms." "This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert, and the prospect of the *smoking ruins* could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man." "The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul: that *rich* and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians."

To complete the history of this dreadful calamity: Alaric meditates the conquest of the ancient mistress of the world. His insulting reply, on one occasion, is very strikingly illustrative of his commission: "*The thicker the hay, the easier to be mowed.*" He three times besieges Rome, and the third time it is sacked by his army, August 24th, 410. "At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was silently opened by the slaves, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a portion of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia."

For four years "they reign, without control, over a country which, in the opinion of the ancients, had united all the excellencies of nature and art." "Each soldier

claimed an ample share of the substantial plenty, the corn and cattle, oil and wine, that was daily collected and consumed in the Gothic camps; and the principal warriors insulted the villas and gardens once inhabited by Lucullus and Cicero, along the beauteous coast of Campania."

SECTION XIII.

The Second Trumpet.

THE infidel and sometime scoffing historian must still be our guide; like an intelligent peasant of the country, whom the invading enemy have seized, and are compelling to go with them to point out the roads and passes, and to explain to them the face of the country: so must we avail ourselves of the superior historical knowledge of the author of the *Decline*, and what he calls "the Fall of the Roman Empire," most unwilling as he would have been to illustrate Scripture prophecies. I believe, indeed, that I owe it entirely to Gibbon that I can satisfactorily make out the two following trumpets.

Chap. viii 8. "And the second angel sounded, and, as it were, a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

The next great calamity which befell the Roman world, the naval victories of Genseric, will explain, by its events, the symbols of this prophecy. The Vandals had prevailed over the other barbarians, and over the last efforts of the Roman power in Spain. "Seville and

Carthage became the prey of the ferocious conquerors :” “ the vessels they found in the harbour of the latter might easily transport them to the *isles* of Majorca and Minorca, where the Spanish fugitives, as in a secure recess, had vainly concealed their families and their fortunes : the *experience of navigation*, and, perhaps, the prospect of Africa, encouraged the Vandals.” “ *The terrible GENSERIC*” succeeds to their government, “ *a name which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of ALARIC and ATTILA.*”

ALARIC, as we have seen, was the leading character symbolized in the first trumpet ; and so shall we be able to show, by the guidance of the historian, that ATTILA is the leading character of the third trumpet : and GENSERIC, “ *the monarch of the sea,*” as Mr. Gibbon calls him,* is clearly this “ great mountain of fire, or what was like a great mountain of fire, cast into the sea.” Gibbon, it is true, first relates, in his history, the adventures of Attila ; but it appears, from the comparison of dates, that the desolations of Genseric commenced three or four years before the invasion of Attila, which may sufficiently account for the vision’s symbolizing the former before the latter, though the devastations of Genseric extended, in time, beyond the conquests of Attila.

In the year 429, Genseric embarks with fifty thousand men. The long and narrow tract of land on the coast of the Mediterranean, the Roman province in Africa, is entirely laid waste, and, by that means, the internal prosperity of Rome, which depended on these provinces

* Page 280.

for a supply of corn, "irretrievably destroyed." "The Vandals and Alani, who followed the successful standard of Genseric, had acquired a rich and fertile territory, which *stretched along the coast* above ninety days' journey from Tangier to Tripoli; but their narrow limits were pressed and confined on either side by the sandy desert and the Mediterranean." "He cast his eyes towards the sea, resolved to create a *naval power*." "His new subjects were skilled in the arts of navigation and ship-building; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare which would render every *maritime country* accessible to their arms." "The fleets which issued from the ports of Carthage, again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean."

"They conquer Sicily," "infest the coast of Italy:" "Genseric, with a numerous fleet, casts anchor at the mouths of the Tiber:" "Rome and its inhabitants are delivered up to the licentiousness of the Vandals and Moors, whose blind passions revenge the injuries of Carthage. The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights, and all that yet remained of public or of private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was diligently conveyed to the vessels of Genseric. Many thousand Romans of both sexes, chosen for some useful or agreeable qualification, reluctantly embarked on board the fleet of Genseric, and their distress was aggravated by the unfeeling barbarians, who, in the division of booty, separated the wives from their husbands, and the children from their parents."

In the following years, we find them making continual inroads on "*the long extended shores of Italy*." They surprise three hundred large vessels in the bay of Carthage. These depredations continue till the year 461.

“ In the spring of each year, they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage, and Genseric himself, though in very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions. His designs were concealed with the most impenetrable secrecy, till the moment that he hoisted sail. When he was asked by the pilot, what course he should steer, *Leave the determination to the winds*, replied the pious barbarian, *they will transport us to the guilty coast, whose inhabitants have provoked the divine justice.*” The historian informs us they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, and, on the moment of their landing, swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry. An expedition sent out by the eastern empire, consisting of one thousand one hundred and thirteen ships, manned by one hundred thousand men, the expense of which was calculated at £5,200,000 sterling, is entirely destroyed in opposing him: and our historian adds, “ After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric became again the tyrant of the seas.”

SECTION XIV.

The Third Trumpet.

Chap. vii. 13. “ And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.”

A STAR, for a teacher or spiritual leader of mankind, may be considered as a standing emblem in prophetic

language;* but the great star here mentioned is a falling or shooting star—a blazing meteor, and will also, like the “wandering stars” of Jude, symbolize a false teacher or impostor. Now, it will be seen that the third leader of the barbarian nations, ATTILA, king of the Huns, whose name, as the historian has told us, deserves an equal rank with those of ALARIC and GENSERIC in the destruction of the Roman empire, will be found, in his distinctive character, to answer to this symbol.

The victorious Huns, who had driven the Goths and Vandals before them, had spread from the Volga to the Danube. “In the reign of Attila, A. D. 433, they became the terror of the world.” Of Attila, the historian tells us, “His head, rather than his hands, achieved the conquest of the north:” “He surpassed his rude countrymen in art rather than in courage:” “His monarchy was erected on the basis of *popular superstition*:” “The *religious acts* of Attila were not less skilfully adapted than those of Zingis to the character of his age and country:” “he acquired a *sacred character*, which rendered his conquests more easy and more permanent; and the barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion or of flattery, that they could not presume to gaze with a steady eye on the *divine majesty* of the king of the Huns.” “He was able to bring into the field five, or according to another account, seven hundred thousand barbarians.”

This well deciphers the symbol of the great falling star: and our guide will explain to us why he is symbolized as falling upon the “rivers and streams of water, and making them bitter,”† &c. For it will appear, from

* Chap. ii. ; iii. ; Numb. xxiv. 17 ; Dan. viii. 10 ; with xii. 3.

† Rev. vii. 13.

our historian's narrative, that the great rivers and streams of the Roman empire as distinctly mark the scene of Attila's impression upon her boundaries, as did the "grass and green trees" the course of Alaric and his Goths; and the "sea," the vulnerable parts exposed to ruin from Genseric and his Vandals.

"In the year 441, they made their grand attack upon the empire, and the reader may trace their devastations, from first to last, by the courses of the great rivers, and on the best watered districts of the Roman territories." The words of the historian are:—"The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles, from the Euxine to the Hadriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field." The Danube, it will be seen from the map, for the most part, forms the boundary of the empire here, receiving, along its whole course, a remarkable multiplicity of rivers and rivulets, while the interior is filled by the Hebrus with its many branches.

"Words the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure were applied," our historian remarks, "to the calamities which he inflicted on seventy cities of the empire." "Theodosius was reduced to solicit peace, and resigned *the extensive and important territory which stretched along the southern banks of the Danube, from Singidunum, or Belgrade, as far as Novæ, in the diocese of Thrace: the breadth was defined by the vague computation of fifteen days' journey:*" "but it appears Naissus was within the limits." "The Huns were *masters of the Danube,*" "and insulted the empire with impunity." This, then, explains the symbol of the star's falling on the rivers and streams, and making them bitter, so that those that drank of their waters died.

It will appear also, from the narrative, that the waters both of the Rhine and the Po partook of this bitterness. Gibbon marks particularly "his ravages over the rich plains of Lombardy, which are *divided by the Po*." His language is remarkable, when he describes the Roman ambassadors supplicating the forbearance of Attila:—"They were introduced to his tent as he lay encamped at the place where the slow winding Mincius is lost in the foaming waves of the lake Benacus." Attila died in the following year.

SECTION XV.

The Fourth Trumpet.

12. "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that a third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

THE imagery of the sixth seal, and of many other prophecies, will have taught us what to expect in the interpretation of the prophetical emblems here portrayed: certainly a revolution in the civil and political state of the empire. Not, indeed, so complete a change as the far stronger language of the sixth seal foreshowed; but a partial and considerable change among the rulers of mankind.

In the order of events which history records, just such a change took place in the Roman world, after these inroads of the barbarian nations of the north, which the three former trumpets predicted. This event was the overthrow of that portion of imperial authority, which, after

the division of the empire and dismemberment of Africa and other provinces, still remained in the west; that is to say, in Italy and its dependencies. Augustulus, the last of these series of Roman emperors, was compelled to seek the clemency of Odoacer. In the year 476, "he was made the instrument of his own disgrace. He signified his resignation to the senate, and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom and the forms of the constitution." In their letter to the emperor Zeno, "in their own name and in the name of the people, they consent that the seat of universal empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople, and they basely renounce the right of choosing their own master, the only vestige which yet remained of the authority that had given laws to the world." "The republic (they say) might safely confide in the civil and military virtues of Odoacer, and they humbly request that the emperor would invest him with the title of Patrician, and the administration of the diocese of Italy."¹

In this place, a remarkable break occurs in the prophetic vision. The sounding of the fifth trumpet does not immediately follow the fourth, as we are prepared to expect; but the apostle tells us,—“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels which are yet to sound.”*

This break in the prophecy might well be supposed

¹ Gibbon.

* Chap. viii. 13.

to mark a corresponding interruption in the order of events that fulfil its predictions; and accordingly, we shall find, that a more considerable space of time intervenes before those events happen that are to be predicted by the fifth trumpet. At the same time, the cry of the heavenly messenger warns us to expect events more disastrous still than had yet been foreshown. Alas! how calamitous is the strain of man's history upon earth! Something worse than the cruel devastations of the *Goths*, the *Vandals*, and the *Huns*, who tore to pieces and trampled under their feet the Roman power in the west, must yet be looked for as the three remaining angels sound their trumpets! But such was the burden of ancient prophecy. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. And the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come."

SECTION XVI.

The Fifth Trumpet.

Chap. ix. 1. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air was darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the pit locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power, and it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any green tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God on their foreheads;

and to them it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shape of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men, and their hair as the hair of women, and their teeth as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were, breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horsemen running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name, in the Hebrew tongue, is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue he hath his name Apollyon."

All commentators of any consideration are agreed that this trumpet symbolizes and predicts the appearance of the Arabian impostor, Mahomet, and his followers. And, following the narrative of the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, from the period of the suppression of the western empire, represented in the last trumpet, we meet with no character, nor with any important change in the affairs of the civilized world, that will, in the least, answer to these symbols. But when "the Arabian prophet" appears, who, as our historian observes, "with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, erects his throne on the ruin of Christianity and of Rome," we immediately recognise the resemblance: and such a character could not have been passed over in the glance of prophecy, since his "genius, and the manners of his nation, and the spirit of his religion, involves the causes of the decline and fall of the eastern

empire; and our eyes are curiously intent on one of the most memorable *revolutions which have impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the globe.*"

Mahomet,¹ like Attila, in the third trumpet, is symbolized by a falling star; not a true star, but one of those blazing meteors, which seem to dart from their proper orbits, and which were supposed to shed a baneful light on mankind. Accordingly, as a pretended prophet of God and teacher of a new religion, Mahomet presents himself to the world. "He did not assume his prophetic office till the fortieth year of his age, in the year 609, or, according to some chronologists, 612, that is, ten years after the HEGIRA, the famous epocha from whence his followers date their time." The opening of the bottomless pit, and letting out the vapour and smoke of the infernal regions, will aptly represent the wicked and diabolical system of religion which he broached, and by means of which so large a portion of the world that had enjoyed the light of the Gospel was obscured and involved in darkness; and the Roman sun, the remaining power and majesty of the Christian emperors, again shorn of its beams, and sunk so low that it seemed almost ready to set in blood. So were "the sun and the air darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

The first effects of the broaching of this false religion were, the converting and attaching to the cause of the

¹ Most expositors, as was observed above, are agreed that the great object of the trumpet is to represent the conquests of Mahomet and his followers. They differ, however, in applying the symbol of the falling star; some applying

it to Mahomet himself, others, to the apostate head of the Christian clergy, considering his fall as the immediate cause of the Mahometan apostasy. I by much prefer the former explanation.

prophet the wandering tribes of Arabia: they became the champions of his religion, and marched at his command to proselyte the world. These, then, were the "locusts that came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit:" and these martial followers of the prophet will be found to answer to the description of the symbolical locusts.

Arabia is remarkable for giving birth to prodigious swarms of locusts, which often overspread and lay waste the neighbouring countries. "Their shape" is said to be "like unto horses prepared to battle: the sound of their wings as the sound of chariots — of many horses running to battle." "Arabia," says Mr. Gibbon, "is, in the opinion of naturalists, the genuine and original country of the horse." The horsemanship of the Arabs has ever been an object of admiration. "The martial youth under the banner of the Emir is ever on horseback and in the field, to practise the exercise of the bow, the javelin, and the scymeter." The "crowns like gold" may refer to the crowns the Arabian followers of the prophet should win; or to their distinctive headdress, the mitre or turban. "They had faces like men, and hair like women." "The Arabians wore their beards, or, at least, mustachoes, as men, while the hair of their heads was flowing or plaited like women's, as Pliny and other ancient authors testify."¹ The "teeth like lion's," and "breastplates of iron," naturally portray their powers in offensive and defensive war.

"And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."—"There were stings in their tails like unto scorpions." The meaning of this is plain.

¹ See Bishop Newton and the authors there quoted.

Prepared they would be for war, and ravenous as lions; but their *scattering* like scorpions the poison of their doctrines behind them, wherever they went, should be the principal injury they would do to mankind. They were distinguished from former instruments of judgment by hurting rather than killing men: this our historian explains:—"The fair option of friendship, or submission, or battle, was proposed to the enemies of Mahomet. If they professed the creed of Islam, they were admitted to all the temporal and spiritual benefits of his primitive disciples, and marched under the same banners to extend the religion that they had embraced. The clemency of the prophet was decided by his interests; yet he seldom trampled on a prostrate enemy, and he seemed to promise that, on the payment of a tribute, the least guilty of his unbelieving subjects might be indulged in their worship, at least, in their imperfect faith."

"In the field of battle, the forfeited lives of the prisoners were redeemed by the profession of Islam; the females were bound to embrace the religion of their masters, and a race of sincere proselytes was gradually multiplied by the education of the infant captives. But the millions of Asiatic and African converts, who swelled the native bands of the faithful Arabs, must have been *allured*, rather than constrained, to declare their belief in one God and the apostle of God." The number of their converts in Asia and the south of Europe cannot be computed: in Africa, the light of the Gospel was totally extinguished.

The command given to the followers of Mahomet "not to hurt the grass," &c., but only those men that had not the mark of God in their forehead, might be understood, from a comparison of the symbols of the first trumpet, to

denote that those verdant and silvan countries of Europe overrun by Alaric and his Goths, should escape; and these were precisely the countries which escaped the ravages of the Arabian locusts. And what is more to be noticed, those parts of the empire which were left untouched by these fanatics, were those, in which, it appears from history, that the remnant of the true church of God was still found residing: they were only to hurt the men who had not the mark of God on their forehead.

“If we compare the east and the west,” says Mr. Milner, “we shall see a very striking difference during this century,” the seventh. “In England, true godliness shone for a considerable part of it: in France, there was a good measure of piety, and from these two countries, divine truth made its way into Germany and the north, with glorious success. In Italy, the Lombards were more and more cleared of Arianism.” “The influences of divine grace seem to have been entirely withdrawn in the east: men had there filled up the measure of their iniquity: Africa had long shared in the general corruption,” &c.

It appears, therefore, that the remnant of true Christians was very much exempted from this woe: but, certainly, the more strict sense of the prophecy respecting the hurting of those men only, by their scorpion-like tails, who had not the mark of God upon their forehead, is, that no true Christian, no one of “the hundred and forty and four thousand,” should be tainted with their hellish doctrine. Agreeably with the prediction of our Lord:—“For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; inso-much that, if it were *possible*, they should deceive the *very elect*.”

It is twice mentioned that five months were to limit the ravages of these locusts. "Read," says Bishop Newton, "the history of the Saracens, and you will find that their greatest exploits were performed, and their greatest conquests were made, within the space of five prophetic months, or one hundred and fifty years—" between the year 612, when Mahomet opened the bottomless pit, and began publicly to teach and propagate his imposture, and the year 762, when Almansor built Bagdad, and called it the city of peace."

After the removal of the government of the caliph to Bagdad, it is no longer reckoned as an Arabian monarchy, and the tribes of Arabia very soon detached themselves from the jurisdiction of the caliphs, who soon dwindled into a shadow of their former greatness. The prophetic locusts are no longer seen with *one king over them*.

It was this spiritual monarch, as seen in his glory, who, no doubt, answered to the symbol of the destroying angel in the prophecy. The false doctrine represented by the smoke of the bottomless pit, alone made the caliph, or successor of Mahomet, what he was: from hence, and not from his personal prowess, he derived all his consequence. As Mr. Gibbon observes,—“From the rapid conquests of the Saracens, presumption will naturally arise, that the first caliphs commanded in person the armies of the faithful;” but, “except the presence of Omar at the siege of Jerusalem, their longest expeditions were the frequent pilgrimages from Medina to Mecca; and they calmly received the tidings of victories as they prayed or preached before the sepulchre of the prophet.”

SECTION XVII.

The Sixth Trumpet.

Chap. ix. 13. "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates, and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men, and the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of their horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouth issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these were the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

It is impossible, from the train of events, and from the quarter of the world in which we are directed to look for the irruption of these prodigious multitudes of horsemen, to mistake to whom the prophecy refers. Our historian and guide shall first show them to us as "bound by the Euphrates,"—and next, as let loose by the decree of Providence.

"In the year 545, Europe felt the shock of a revolution, which first revealed to the world the name and the nation of the **TURKS**." "They sallied from the mountains of Imaus, and established a powerful empire." "As

the subject nations marched under the standard of the Turks, *their cavalry, both men and horses, were proudly computed by millions*; and the force of their effective armies consisted of four hundred thousand soldiers, and, in less than fifty years, they were connected in peace and war with the Romans, the Persians, and the Chinese.” “In the year 844, they passed the Caspian straits, and settled in Armenia Major.” “In 1038, they subdued Persia, Irak, &c., and, by the conquest of Media, approached the Roman confines.” “From the Oxus to the Euphrates, these military colonies were protected and propagated by their native princes.”

They are symbolized, moreover, in the prophecy, as having, like the Arabian locusts, power to hurt by their tails—more power, as it should seem, for in the present symbol the “scorpion’s tail” is exchanged for the “serpent’s head.” This the historian shall explain:—“The whole body of the nation embraced the religion of Mahomet.” “Since the fall of the caliphs, the discord and degeneracy of the Saracens respected the Asiatic frontiers of Rome, which, by the victories of Nicephorus, Zimisces, and Basil, had been extended as far as Antioch and the eastern boundaries of Armenia. Twenty-five years after the death of Basil, his successors were suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united *the Scythian valour with the fanaticism of new converts*, and the arts and riches of a powerful monarchy.” “On this occasion,” the historian remarks, “*the myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Taurus to Arzeroum* ;” that is, where the *Euphrates* forms the borders of Cappadocia and Pontus: “and the blood of a hundred and thirty thousand was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet.” Their armies, how-

ever, make at this time no lasting impression upon the countries on this side the river. The Euphrates may still be said to be the boundary of the empire, and it is very important to mark, if we can, when it ceases to be so, as a date, of some consequence to the interpretation of other prophecies, is to be then fixed.

The historian notices that, in the year 1062, or 1063, "Alp-Arslan passed the *Euphrates*, at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and entered Cesarea." In the year 1065—1068, they "penetrate into the heart of Phrygia," but "are driven back *beyond the Euphrates* by the emperor Romanus." "The Romans are again defeated by Alp-Arslan, in the year 1071." "On this fatal day," the historian indeed remarks, "the Asiatic provinces were irretrievably lost." It does not, however, appear that they extorted, at this time, any city or province from the empire: and after this event, the Turkish empire was much weakened by a civil war, which ended in a lasting separation into *four* dynasties, *Persia*, *Kerman*, *Syrie* and *Roum*. To these has been applied the symbol of the prophecy, "*four* angels bound in the Euphrates."

It appears that the dynasty of Roum effected the conquest of Asia Minor during the years 1074 to 1084. "Soliman, with his four brothers, pass the *Euphrates*. The Turkish camp was soon seated in the neighbourhood of Kutaich, in Phrygia; and his flying cavalry laid waste all the country as far as the Hellespont." This invasion, however, was not conducted by those Turks who were destined to destroy all the remains of the Roman empire in the east. The power of these Turks was broken by the conquest of Zingis and the Moguls: but shortly afterwards we find the Ottoman Turks passing the same river, so celebrated in Turkish invasions, and passing it

to return no more to their former boundaries, but to establish a mighty empire, which has lasted till our time.

Gibbon tells us,—“Soliman Shaw was drowned in the passage of the Euphrates; his son, Or-thogrul, became the soldier and subject of Alidan, sultan of Iconium, and established, at Surgut, on the banks of the Sangar, a camp of four hundred families, or tents, whom he governed fifty-four years. He was the father” “of *Othman*.” “It was on the 27th of July, in the year 1299, that Othman first invaded the territory of Nicomedia, and the singular accuracy of the date seems to disclose some foresight of the rapid and destructive growth of the monster.”

The progress of the Ottoman Turks may be thus briefly stated:—“In 1300, Anatolia is divided among the Turkish emirs;—In 1312, the captivity and ruin of the seven churches of Asia is completed.” Orchan, who succeeded in the year 1326, conquered Bithynia. The Turks pass over to Europe, and gain an establishment there in 1353. Amurath I. fixes the seat of his government at Adrianople; he reigns from 1360 to 1389. Bajazet reigns till 1403, and extends his conquest from the Euphrates to the Danube. The conquests of Timour for a short time suppress the power of the Ottomans, but the empire is restored by Mahomet I. in 1421. To him Amurath II. succeeds; and his successor, Mahomet II., began his reign in 1451, by whose forces Constantinople was besieged, and taken by assault, May 29th, 1453.

Our guide will lastly explain to us what is meant in the prophecy by “the breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone,” and by “the fire, smoke, and brimstone that issues from their lion-like,”—perhaps, roaring,—“mouths, and destroys the third part of mankind.”

Speaking of the sultan's attack of Constantinople, Mr. Gibbon observes:—"Among the implements of destruction, he studied, with peculiar care, the recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his *artillery* surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world." "The *great cannon* of Mahomet has been separately *an important and visible object in the history of the times*. But that enormous engine, which required, it is said, seventy yoke of oxen and two thousand men to draw it, was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude: the long order of *Turkish artillery* was pointed against the wall; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these it is ambiguously expressed, that it was mounted with a hundred and thirty guns, or that it discharged a hundred and thirty bullets,"—"a circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople is the union of the ancient and modern artillery." "The fortifications were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman cannon." "The Ottoman *artillery* thundered on all sides, and the camp and city, the Greeks and Turks, *were involved in a cloud of smoke*, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman empire."

In the explanation of the fifteenth verse, "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men,"¹ Sir Isaac Newton observes:—"They slew the third part of men when they conquered the Greek empire and took Constantinople, A. D. 1453; and

¹—"The kingdoms subdued by the Mahometans, if examined by the maps, will be found to com-
pose a full third part of the then Christian world," &c. — DEAN WOODHOUSE.

they began to be prepared for this purpose when Olub-Arslan began to conquer the nations upon Euphrates, A. D. 1063. The interval is called an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, or three hundred and ninety-one prophetic days, which are years. In the first thirty years, Olub-Arslan and Melech-Schah conquered the nations upon Euphrates, and reigned over the whole. Melech-Schah died A. D. 1092, and was succeeded by a little child, and then this kingdom broke into four kingdoms, Miyapharekin, Mosul, Aleppo, and Iconium."

The interpretation of Bishop Newton, which I believe to be the true one, is as follows:—"The first conquest mentioned in history, of the Ottomans over the Christians, was in the year 1281: for Ortogrul, in that year, according to the accurate historian Saadi, crowned his victories with the conquest of the famous city of Kutahi from the Greeks. Compute three hundred and ninety-one years from that time, and they will terminate in the year 1672; and in that year Mohammed IV. took Carmeniac from the Poles, and forty-eight towns and villages in the territory of Carmeniac were delivered up to the sultan upon the treaty of peace. Whereupon Prince Cantemir has made this memorable reflection,—‘This was the last victory by which any advantage accrued to the Ottoman state, or any city or province was annexed to the ancient bounds of the empire.’ Agreeably to this observation, he has entitled the former part of his history, ‘*Of the Growth of the Ottoman Empire,*’ and the following part, of ‘*the Decay of the Ottoman Empire.*’"

A very remarkable note of observation follows this prophecy of the Euphratean horsemen:—

20. "And the rest of men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils,"—or, "demons,"—"and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither see, nor hear, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theft."

"How clear is it, from this note, that the great "*falling away*," connected in prophecy with the revealing of "the man of sin,"* had already taken place; and had taken place in that part of the Christian world which had not been visited by the second woe; that is to say, in the western empire, or the Roman empire proper! And here many former prophecies have pointed out to us the seat of the great apostate power, that stands up as the last enemy to be destroyed at the brightness of the Saviour's coming: "Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines *concerning* demons,"—or, "supposed intermediate beings between the throne of the Most High and his worshippers upon earth,"—is the very mark given us by St. Paul: and, in the passage before us, the Spirit of prophecy himself applies those ancient predictions to papal Europe: for the connexion of the prophetic narrative forbids us to apply it to any other country and people. What, indeed, was the fact when these judgments, of which the Turks were the instruments, were abroad in the earth? The state of Christendom was truly deplorable. The worship of saints and idols, and all the abominations of the apostate priesthood, were at their height, and many bloody persecutions had the

* 2 Thess.

advocates of idolatry instituted against the true worshippers of God. But these judgments produced no repentance nor reformation. Papal Europe was alarmed at the progress of the Turks: the progress of the Turks was, at one era, the common cry of danger. But the European nations of the Roman world repented not to say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" but drank deeper and deeper still from the cup of the fornications of the mystic Babylon.

The remaining part of the Revelation will show us, as we may naturally expect, something more about this "mystery of iniquity;" and how, in this western empire, — while the judgments of the fifth and sixth seals were finishing the doom of the south and of the east, — the "man of sin" and the "wicked one" were developed.

The little horn of Daniel's third beast — Mahometism — strong by its own power, the Arabian Saracens, and strong by a power not its own, the Turks, — had "magnified himself against the Prince of the host, and had prevailed." In the intermediate time, "THE APOSTASY" had attained its height in the west; and, in the divided fourth empire, had appeared the other "little horn," that would "wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws;" and who, by his blasphemies, was to bring on, or, at least, lead the way to, the final catastrophe of the Roman empire, — the last earthly enemy of Messiah and his people.

The seventh trumpet, containing the seven last vials of the wrath of God, will show us the destruction of this great apostate; but first, in several *episodes* or *interludes*, we are, by a variety of symbols, taught his nature and his general history.

SECTION XVIII.

The Second Interlude, or Prelude to the Seventh Trumpet.

WHAT forms the tenth chapter will be found to be a prelude, or preface, to this most important part of the vision, which remains to be explained, containing the imagery which is to symbolize the last empire in its divided state, and to develop its history previously to the pouring forth of the last judgments, which are to bring it to its final destruction, and immediately prepare the way for the erection of the promised kingdom of the Messiah.

The descent of a mighty angel first arrests the attention of St. John:—

“ And I saw a mighty angel come down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was over his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.”

That this angel is a fresh emblem of the great Redeemer, is plain from the third verse of the following chapter. Nothing, indeed, can be more glorious or illustrative of divine majesty than his appearance. His countenance is like the sun shining in his strength; but he veils his brightness, too dazzling for human view, in a covering cloud. “ The rainbow” over his head represents that, in the commission on which he comes, he remembers the everlasting covenant with his chosen people: the fiery feet, at the same time, denote that he comes to

take vengeance upon his enemies, and to trample them in his fury : —*

“ And he had in his hand a little book open ; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth.”

Of the use of the little book we shall see below. The position of his feet, if we have respect to the situation of Patmos, may denote that both Europe and Asia would be the scene of the subsequent judgment : —

“ And he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth.”

That is, with a voice of tremendous threatening. This voice is answered by seven claps of thunder, that roll articulate sounds : —

“ And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.”

This is, indeed, most mysterious. It should seem something was revealed to St. John which it was not deemed necessary that the church should know, at least, not at that time. It appears not improbable that the seven thunders explained to the apostle the general meaning of the *seven seals*, as far as the sounding of the seventh trumpet ; all of which have been explained to us by the event, but which, to the apostle himself, must have been totally obscure and unintelligible. This notion is, perhaps, confirmed by the circumstance, that the remaining emblems have, *all* of them, explanations attached to them ; but the seals and trumpets have none,

* Compare Isaiah, liv. 8, 9.

except the thunders gave them. And it was, perhaps, the will of Christ, that they should only be known to his church by their fulfilment, and not by that till towards the time of the end : —

“ And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there should be time no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared unto his servants the prophets.”

We may, perhaps, explain this passage, “ that the time shall be no longer deferred,”—the time for publishing to the church the explanation afforded by the seven thunders ; “ but in the day of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound,”—or, “ shall sound,” or, “ be about to sound,”—“ then shall the mystery of God be finished.” Or we may thus consider the passage more generally, without reference to the thunders. The words of the oath are,—“ That time,” or, “ delay shall be no longer ; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the mystery of God, as he announced to his own servants, the prophets, shall also be finished.” That is, in due course and order after he hath began to sound, the events that accomplish the mysterious word of prophecy shall begin to go forth till all is finished. The finishing of a mystery may signify the disclosing it, so that the mystery is explained, and the initiated are admitted to learn its most secret arcana.

Sir Isaac Newton has some very important remarks that touch upon this point. Speaking of this prophetic

book, he says, it “ is called *Revelation*, with respect to the *Scriptures of truth*, which *Daniel* was commanded to *shut up and seal* till the time of the end; and until that time comes, the Lamb is opening the seals: and afterwards, the two witnesses prophesy out of it a long time in sackcloth, before they ascend up to heaven in a cloud; all which is as much as to say, that these prophecies of *Daniel* and *John* should not be understood till the time of the end. ‘ *Then,*’ says *Daniel*, ‘ many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.’ This is, therefore, a part of the prophecy, that it should not be understood before the last age of the world; and, therefore, it makes for the credit of prophecy that it is not understood. But if the last age, the age of opening these things, be now approaching, as by the great successes of late interpreters it seems to be, we have more encouragement than ever to look into these things. If the general preaching of the Gospel be approaching, it is to us and our posterity that these words mainly belong: *In the time of the end the wise shall understand. Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein.*”¹

Many expositors² are of opinion that the sounding of the seventh trumpet marks, at its commencement, the coming of the time of the end—the termination of the period of the “ time, times, and a dividing of time,”—the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of *Daniel*:

¹ Observations upon the Prophecies of *Daniel* and *St. John*, page 240, &c.

² Bishop Newton, Mede, Whiston, Dr. More, and Mr. Coninghame, all concur in think-

ing that the one thousand two hundred and sixty years terminate at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, or at the end of the sixth.

and what much confirms this notion, is a comparison of the *oath* here sworn by the great angel with Dan. xii. 7: —“ And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever, that *it shall be* for a time, and times, and an half.” So here, in the passage before us, the same awful interposition of an oath, by the Everlasting, points to the sounding of the seventh trumpet—and to the commencement of his sounding, as it should seem—for the coming of that great epocha, and, in due course, the solution of all mystery concerning it, which he had declared to his servants, the prophets. This is the awful oath of the Almighty we met with in the early part of our researches, in “ the Song of Remembrance,” as announcing the dreadful judgments to fall on the last foes of the church of God:—“ For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, As I live for ever, I will whet my glittering sword,” &c.*

8. “ And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth; and I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book: and he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth as sweet as honey: and I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter: and he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

The apostle is prepared afresh to continue his pro-

* Deut. xxxii. 40, &c. Compare Isaiah, xiv. 24.

phesying, and he is again *installed*, as it were, in his office. Such I conceive to be what is meant by this figurative act of eating a little book, which the angel gives him. He is to take and digest it well. Sweet will be the employ to learn the mysteries of God; but if the prophet has a heart to feel for the miseries of his fellow creatures, so many are the scenes of mourning and desolation, of treachery and apostasy, to be disclosed, that it cannot but fill him with the most sorrowful and *bitter* reflections. He will be ready, with the affectionate prophet of old, to exclaim, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained to my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace: because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet; the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried."*

Such I conceive to be all that is meant by the visionary eating of a little book by St. John. The prophet Ezekiel had a similar *installution* into his office when sent to prophesy to the contumacious Jews. He was made to "eat a roll written within and without, with lamentation, and mourning, and woe." A bitter duty had he to perform; but he said "it was within his mouth as honey for sweetness."

All this strongly marks the importance of this last division of the Revelation, for which we are being prepared—the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

The seventh angel, we are to bear in mind, doth not yet sound. The train of prophetic events is still, for some time, suspended, in order, by a distinct set of visionary scenes, to reveal to the prophet symbolical representations of the character of the parties that should

* Jeremiah, iv. 19, &c.

be involved in the great catastrophe of the plagues of the last trumpet.

The historic narrative of the prophecy has brought us down to the destruction of the eastern empire by the Turks. That trumpet and the one before it have entirely occupied us in the east, in the development of the predicted little horn of the *third* empire in Daniel's prophecies. But during this period, another power of greater importance, the little horn of the fourth beast, had been developed in the west — in the Roman Empire proper in its divided state. Of this we were admonished at the end of the last trumpet: — “ And the rest of men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils,” or, “ demons, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood,” &c.

All this concerns the professing church. That church, in two divisions of the globe, Africa and the East, may now be considered as, in a general view, extinct, or dispersed by the judgments of the fifth and sixth trumpets. But these awful judgments had produced no repentance and reformation among the rest of professed Christians, sunk every where into the grossest corruptions, and even into idolatry itself. Such an apostasy and such a revival of idolatry, was, indeed, long since foretold as forming the last enemy of the cause of Christ, — to be destroyed at the time of his appearing — and as forming this enemy out of the *broken remnants* of the fourth, or Roman Empire. *

In order to show the nature and history of this cor-

* Deut. xxxii. 28, &c.; Numb. xxiv. 24; Isaiah, xxiv. 5, &c.; and Daniel.

ruption, the following scene of the vision is introduced, before the seventh angel begins to sound. The vision carries us back to represent the state of the church in which these abominations had risen.

Chap. xi. 1. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

The symbolical temple and city are here evidently emblems of the professing Catholic church. The mystical act of measuring off those that worship near the sanctuary and the altar, and of leaving the rest of the temple, with the holy city Jerusalem, to be trodden under foot by Gentiles, represents, that all are, indeed, in a sense, inhabitants of the mystic Jerusalem, and attendants upon her worship. But they stand at a distance, they approach not the altar nor the sanctuary; they are not in reality meet partakers of the holy mysteries of that religion which they profess. They have a "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof:" they are "Jews" only "outwardly." But the worshippers in the measured space are the real converts of divine grace, who truly embrace the doctrines of the atonement and of the covenant. In the apostle's language, alluding to the same ceremonial worship,—"They eat of the altar, and are partakers of the sacrifices:" they "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," &c. The number, indeed, among those who have borne the name of Christian, who have penetrated so far into the mystic temple of Christianity, has ever been small in comparison

of the bulk of professors who have peopled our Jerusalem. The greater part, though inhabiting that city, and treading the courts of the Lord's house, are still but Gentiles; their conversion is not real; they are "uncircumcised" "in heart" and in "lips."

The period here assigned to the prevalence of this corruption is evidently the same period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years noted in the prophecies of Daniel, as marking the reign of the symbolical little horn of the beast. Times and laws are to be given into his hands, "for a time, and times, and a dividing of time." And the symbolizing of the Christian church in this vision, by Jerusalem and its temple, much confirms, I think, the explanation given of Dan. xii. 11, where we considered the "taking away the continual offering, and setting up the abomination of desolation,"—which was *literally* the profaning and destruction of the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans,—as *typical* of the abolition of the ordinances of the Christian church by the introduction of the Roman Catholic idolatry.

But although the outward church should thus be overrun, for the period mentioned, by a new race of infidels; yet, during all that time, God would not leave himself without witnesses, who, like Paul and Barnabas, in Lycaonia, should preach unto them, that they "should turn from these vanities unto the living God."*

3. "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand and two hundred and threescore days in sackcloth."

Witnesses for the truth shall be raised up in *sufficient*

* Lowman; Bishop Newton.

numbers, that shall bear an uninterrupted testimony to the truths of the Gospel; but they will discharge their ministry in circumstances of grief and affliction all their days. The history of the church in the west, since the setting up of the abomination of the popedom and the Roman Catholic idolatry, will fully illustrate this emblem. The faithful servants of Christ, who testified to the world that its deeds were evil, and were not ashamed of Christ and of his doctrine, in the midst of a wicked and adulterous generation, have, all along, been exposed to the hatred, the scorn, and injury of their false and nominal brethren, and sometimes have been persecuted even to death. The following verses seem to represent, in figurative language, that, despised and afflicted as these witnesses were, a divine efficacy should attend their administrations, and a divine vengeance vindicate their wrongs:—

“ These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.”

—That is, the truths which the witnesses speak shall judge them at the last day.¹

“ These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.”

—That is, God restrains the heavenly dew of his spiritual influences from falling, but in connexion with the preach-

¹ “ They strike down their mouth, denouncing the judgments of God against them.”—MEDE.

ing of his faithful witnesses:—it “pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.”

“And they have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.”

Prophets are said, in symbolical language of prophecy, to do what they predict,—to pray for that which, in the Spirit, they denounce or imprecate. Waters are explained, in a subsequent vision, to signify “peoples.” The symbol, therefore, implies, that a slighted and persecuted Gospel will bring upon nations afflictive wars and judgments.

7. “And when they have finished”—or, “shall be about to finish”¹—“their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom, and Egypt, where also”—or rather, “and by the name of that city where”—“our Lord was crucified.”

Nothing has yet been said in this vision respecting the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit; but St. John and the Christian church would know, from Daniel’s prophecies, that this beast could be none other than that which symbolized the fourth or Roman empire.

“The great city” is clearly the residence of professed Christians—the city trodden under feet of the Gentiles

¹ “*Cùm finituri sint testimonium suum, sic enim όταν τελεσῶσι vertendum, non de præterito, cùm finierint.*”—MEDE.

Perhaps *τελεσῶσι την μαρτυριαν* may be understood, not — “have

finished their testimony in regard to the period of its continuance,” but — “shall have perfected it in the full assertion of every truth they were sent to declare.”

during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years. This city is called *Sodom*, because the cry of its sins will one day bring down fire from heaven upon it. It is called *Egypt*, because the church of God, the true Israel, dwells within it, in an oppressed and persecuted state. It is spiritually called *Jerusalem*, for the reason shown in the first and second verses—but it is Jerusalem as murdering the Lord of Glory, which is the true symbol of this apostate city.

A short triumph of the apostate powers of the Roman world over those who bear a public testimony against its abominations, is, therefore, what is apparently predicted in this prophecy: not the prevailing of this monster over the saints of God, against whom he makes war: his triumph there is marked by the longer period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years; but the triumph in this place is the silencing of these witnesses who, during that period, disturb the harmony of his reign. The triumph is evidently to be short—we may say is hardly complete; for, though the symbolical witnesses are slain, it seems that their followers would not give them up, as though they expected the revival of their life; that is to say, the resumption of their testimony:—

9. “And they of the peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations,”—that is, the redeemed out of the nations,—“shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.”

10. “And they that dwell upon the earth,”—that is, the apostate faction, their enemies,—“shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.”

Their triumph, however, is but short; nor does the

expectation of the people of God respecting their slain witnesses, disappoint them:—

“ And after three days and a half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them which saw them: and they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.”

It is certainly a most momentous question: Can we read the fulfilment of this predicted event in the history of the past? Or, drawing near, as we must be doing, to the termination of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years—if we have not passed it—are we daily and hourly to expect the sad disclosure? The violent suppression for a short season—three years and a half—of the Gospel testimony among the professing nations of the Roman world?

Many commentators, with Bishop Newton, conceive the event to be yet future; but the two latest expositors of eminence, Mr. Faber and Mr. Cuninghame, both agree in the persuasion that the fulfilment of the prediction is to be traced in the *history of the Reformation*; and I conceive, upon the whole, there is reason to rest with confidence in this interpretation.

We may regret that our forced guide, the historian of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, can be of little further use to us; as his narrative, except in a very summary view of events, goes not down sufficiently low for our purpose. However, in taking leave of him, his general reflections on the opponents of the church of Rome, that is to say, on our witnesses, will not be unimportant. After speaking of the persecution of the Albigeois, he observes, “ The visible assemblies of the Paulicians, or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and

sword, and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled still lived and breathed in the *western world*. In the state, and in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the BIBLE as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology. The struggles of Wickliff in England, of Huss in Bohemia, were premature and ineffectual; but the names of Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin, are pronounced, with gratitude, as the *deliverers of nations*.*

This is a remarkable testimony! We have here plainly pointed out a long succession of witnesses, "protesting against the tyranny of Rome, embracing the BIBLE as a rule of faith." They protest long in vain, though the same "*invincible spirit lives and breathes*." At length, however, the historian points to an era—and that era is the era of the Reformation—when the struggles of these *protesters* against the corruption and tyranny of Rome were not "premature or ineffectual," but they became the "*deliverers of nations*." Now, if we can find in this struggle an interval of three years and a half, when this "spirit" of former witnesses might figuratively be said not to "live and breathe" in the witnesses that should then have stood for the testimony of the truth; and if, afterwards, this same spirit revives, and *nations* enjoy deliverance; then, indeed, we shall be ready to acknowledge that the prophecy has been here fulfilled. For the witnesses to ascend to heaven in a cloud, may certainly, in prophetic language, be understood to symbo-

* Chap. liv.

lize their being placed in the political heavens, as stars and lights; that is to say, may represent the national or public establishment of Protestant churches.

It was, as the ecclesiastical historian Milner informs us, in the year 1518, that Martin Luther, the great instrument in the hand of Providence to bring about that Reformation of which we treat, began, in opposition to the blasphemous doctrines of popery, to maintain *justification by faith alone, through the merits of the only Lord and Saviour*, a doctrine which, when received in power, overturns, from their very foundations, all the doctrines of seducing spirits, and the doctrines concerning demons—the mediating saints—the Mahuzzim, according to Daniel—of apostate Christendom.

Thus the prophet Habakkuk* had characterized the great Antichrist:—

Lo, lifted he, his soul is not right within him,
But the just by his faith shall live.

And this, I am strongly inclined to believe, is what is meant by the witnesses “*finishing* their testimony,”—not drawing it to a conclusion, but bringing it to perfection, in the assertion of this fundamental article—accomplishing its object. “It must be confessed,” says Mr. Milner, “that the labours of Claudius of Turin, of the Waldensian barbs, of Wickliff, and of Huss, had not been sufficiently directed against the predominant corruptions in doctrine, though the practical abuses of the popedom had been exposed with ingenious freedom and disinterested courage. The external branches, rather than the bitter tree itself, which supported all the evils of

* Chap. ii. 4.

false religion, being attacked, no permanent or extensive change had ensued. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the popedom; and the Hussites, divided among themselves, and worn out by a long series of contentions, were reduced to silence. Among both were found persons of undoubted godliness, but they appeared incapable of making effectual impressions on the kingdom of Antichrist. But not many years after the commencement of the sixteenth century, the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the Gospel more evangelically judicious, more simply founded on the word of God, and more ably and more successfully conducted, than any which had ever been since the days of Augustin." And we may add, with respect to the grand article of Protestant testimony—justification by faith—far superior to the ministry of Augustin and the fathers of his age, or of the ages immediately preceding.

Luther's description of himself about this time, written at a subsequent period of his life, is so illustrative of the course of the "witness prophesying in sackcloth," that I cannot forbear its quotation:—"How weak and contemptible was I, and in how fluctuating a state of mind, when I began this business"—of indulgences!—"I found myself involved in it alone, and, as it were, by surprise; and when it became impossible for me to retreat, I made many concessions to the pope; not, however, in many important points, but certainly, at that time, I adored him in earnest. In fact, how despised and wretched a monk was I then!"—"Whereas, in regard to the pope, how great was his majesty; the potentates of the earth trembled at his nod." "How distressed my heart was in that year (1517) and the following; how submissive my mind was to the hierarchy; not feignedly,

but really: nay, how was I almost driven to despair through agitation of care, and fear, and doubt, those secure spirits little know, who, at this day, insult the majesty of the pope with much pride and arrogance. But I, who then alone sustained the danger, was not so certain, not so confident. I was ignorant of many things which, by the grace of God, I now understand."—"I waited for divine instruction with such ardent and continued eagerness, and was so overloaded with cares, that I became almost stupid and distracted: I scarcely knew when I was asleep or when awake."

This well explains "the witness in sackcloth," and shows, in a remarkable manner, how the Lord's strength is made perfect in his poor instrument's weakness! It may lead, too, to the reflection, that, in various respects, and especially in particular situations, this witnessing to the truth in sackcloth has not altogether ceased: if some faithful preachers have ascended the political heavens, and become the deliverers of nations, many still bear their testimony in poverty and distress, exposed to the world's neglect, or contempt, or avowed hatred.

Luther had, however, many followers and favourers. The pope at first treated the affair with indifference; but he was at length roused, not only by the cries of the venders of indulgences, but also by the emperor, who complained of Luther's having made many converts even among persons of rank and distinction. At once the pope passed from the extreme of neglect and indifference to those of tyrannical violence and blind temerity; so that his imprudence, at this critical moment, may seem almost the consequence of judicial infatuation.

Luther is condemned and threatened with excommunication, but is protected by the elector of Saxony.

In the beginning of the year 1519, the emperor Maximilian died; and during the interregnum, the elector, as vicar of the empire, possesses sufficient power to protect Lutherism in its infancy:—"An amazing revolution of sentiment was taking place;"—"During the short space of three years, 1518, 1519, 1520, the systematic prejudices of many centuries were almost overturned in the minds of multitudes of the inhabitants of Europe:"—"Charles V. was elected emperor in the summer of 1519; his first diet was held at Worms, 1521. Here Luther appears, and makes a bold and noble defence. On this act, he reflects a little before his death:—"So fearless can God render a man!"—"I do not know whether, at this day, I should be so bold."

The prudence of his friend, the elector, saves him on this occasion, who orders him to be seized and carried into concealment. In the meantime, his works are dispersed in abundance, and produce the most surprising and happy effects, especially the New Testament, which he published in the German language in the year 1522. In 1526, the pope labours to combine all the potentates of Europe against the pestilential heresy: the emperor concurs with the pope, and the papal princes of Germany conspire together. The princes favourable to the Reformation also enter into a treaty for their mutual defence. The critical state of affairs induces to moderation: afterwards, a rupture between the emperor and pope suspends the attack upon the reformers. In the year 1529, a severe decree is passed against them in the second diet held at Spire, from their solemn *protest* against which they obtain the name of *Protestants*. In the years 1530, 1531, 1535, and 1537, the Protestant princes associate themselves together in defence of re-

ligion, in what was called the league of Smalcalde. "The emperor, by a long series of artifice and policy, had gained so much time that his measures, though not altogether ripe for execution, were in great forwardness."¹ 1546, the Protestant confederacy, late so powerful, falls to pieces. In 1547,² he totally routs the elector of Saxony, and takes him prisoner at Muhlberg. In the following year, a system of doctrine, called the INTERIM, was drawn up by command of the emperor, wherein the obnoxious doctrines of popery are retained, though expressed, for the most part, in the softest language, or in Scripture phrases, or in terms of studied ambiguity. This was presented and read in the diet, on the 15th day May, 1548. "*Many kept silence through fear*, and that silence was interpreted as a tacit consent. Some had courage to oppose, and *these were reduced by force of arms*, and the most deplorable scenes of bloodshed and violence were acted throughout the whole empire."³

"The death of the *witnesses* took place when they were silenced and compelled to desist from bearing testimony. This was effected by the promulgation and enforcement of the INTERIM, in the year 1548."⁴

About three years and a half afterwards, towards the end of the year 1551, Maurice of Saxony commences openly his operations for the deliverance of the Protestants, and demands the release of the landgrave of Hesse. Early in the following spring, he takes the field; "every where in his march he reinstates the magistrates whom the emperor had deposed, and gave possession of the churches to the Protestant ministers whom he had ejected."

¹ Robertson's History of Charles V. ² April 24th.

³ Ibid. ⁴ Faber and Cuninghame.

Thus, then, appears to have been fulfilled the symbolical death and resurrection of the witnesses. Charles V. was, at this time, certainly the nominal head of the revived Roman empire; and it was the beast, not its little horn singly, that was to conduct this war against the witnesses. He killed them, as we have seen, when, taking advantage of his victories and the general consternation, he imposed the INTERIM upon the subdued Protestants; their acceptance of this silenced their testimony; this was, in their symbolical character, to slay them; the spirit of the ancient martyrs, "who loved not their lives unto death," no longer lived and breathed in them.

But the testimony they had borne, though publicly suppressed, could not be forgotten. Multitudes, in their hearts, detested the doctrines of the Interim, though there was no Luther boldly to testify against them; and his successors were awed into silence. It was, no doubt, this feeling of the public mind that impelled Maurice to adopt that line of conduct which he did: and this is what is probably intended by the mysterious language of the prophecy,—“And they of the peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” This seems to represent, not the act of an enemy, but of the favourers of the witnesses. Looking with astonishment and regret upon their silenced pastors, they were still unwilling to give them up, though they could no longer hear from their lips that testimony which had quickened their hearts, and had induced them to enter the lists against the proud contemners of the Gospel.

Thus, though not buried, nor removed out of sight,

the witnesses lay dead in the street¹ of the great city, while their enemies rejoiced over them, being no longer tormented by their bold and faithful testimony.

11. "And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell on them that saw them."

The operations of Maurice, as he moved in his unexpected opposition to Charles, effected this. "No words," says the historian, "can express the emperor's astonishment and consternation at events so unexpected." He flees from Inspruck with the utmost panic and precipitancy. "The operations of Maurice had also the effect of immediately breaking up the council of Trent, the fathers of the council being seized with a general consternation on receiving intelligence of his having taken up arms:"—

12. "And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither; and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them."

The heavens here, as we have remarked before, may refer to the symbolical heavens—the station of the governing powers of mankind. The witnesses were not only to revive and stand upon their feet as witnesses; but, in spite of their opponents, were, as witnesses, to be promoted to political power, to be the religious governors and teachers of nations. The victories of Maurice were immediately followed by the treaty of Passau, in which the independence of the Protestants was secured,—“Protestants were admitted, indiscriminately with Catholics,

¹ In Germany, “the highway of Europe,” as it has been called.

to sit in the court of the imperial chamber." The importance of the treaty of Passau cannot be better shown, than by quoting the observations of the historian of the reign of Charles V.—"Such was the memorable treaty of Passau, that overturned the vast fabric, in erecting which Charles had employed so many years, and had exerted the utmost efforts of his power and policy; that disannulled all his regulations with regard to religion; defeated all his hopes of rendering the imperial authority absolute and hereditary in his family; and established the Protestant church, which had hitherto subsisted precariously in Germany through connivance or by expedients, upon a firm and secure basis."

13. "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men,"—or, "of the names of men,"—"seven thousand; and the remnant,"—or, "the rest,"¹—"were affrighted, and gave glory to God."

Here, too, the history of the times we are considering will explain the fulfilment of prophecy. An earthquake is uniformly, in prophetic language, a revolution in the religious or political state of society. Great political convulsions are, therefore, here foreboded. It is not, however, that great final revolution, one day to be expected, that changes the whole face of the Roman world: the damage, we shall see, to the mystic city, is only partial.

It is certain, that, at the same season in which the scenes above described took place, Europe was convulsed throughout, and all the kingdoms in communion with

¹ Οἱ λοιποί.

the church of Rome were agitated exceedingly by the propagation of the doctrines of the Reformation. France was, at one time, half disposed to cast off the papal yoke. In the Netherlands, it cost the massacre of a hundred thousand persons to stay the rising commotions. In Italy, the pope found full employ for his inquisitors to suppress the doctrines of the Reformation: as did the emperor himself for his military government of Naples. Even most catholic Spain herself felt some very evident shocks of the great earthquake; but the dreadful Inquisition, here armed with full power, prevailed to keep entire the fabric of the Romish superstition and idolatry.

The whole papal city was certainly shaken to its very foundations: but the great permanent effect of the earthquake was to be, that *the tenth part of the city fell*. And so it came to pass; for in one of the kingdoms of the Roman world, counted, too, among the ten horns of the fourth beast, the shocks of this earthquake were so fatal to the papal power and superstition, that the whole fell to the ground, so shattered to pieces that no subsequent attempts of the great enemy could ever make it stand upon its foundations. "With loud ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving to Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, we may record — SUCH WERE THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN GREAT BRITAIN."¹ An entire kingdom, one of the ten original kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided, fell off altogether from the communion of the idolatrous church, and became the chief opponent to the papacy, and chief support of the Protestant interests in all parts of the world."

¹ Philo, in the Christian Observer; Cuninghame; and recently Mr. Faber.

“ And in the earthquake were slain seven thousand names of men.” This seems to describe the general effect of the political convulsion. I should suppose it designates the injury done to the institutions and religious orders of the Roman Catholic world. And great changes were certainly effected, by the Reformation, in the general situation of Europe. But where are we to look for “ the remnant,” or “ the rest,” who were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven? Certainly not to the other Papists, with their inquisitors and new armies of Jesuits, nor to that partial reformation of morals which the Roman clergy found it expedient to adopt, in order the better to support the credit of their idols, their superstition, and their false doctrines: but, rather, we are to look to those other parts of the world, in the neighbourhood of the mystic city—as the event has shown—to Denmark, and Sweden, and other districts in the north: for certainly one of the immediate effects of the reformation was, that those countries, which had been used to drink of the cup of the fornication of the mystic Babylon, took alarm, purified themselves from their abominable idolatries, and received the pure tenets of the evangelical religion.

The next verse, which ought to have concluded this chapter, for it concludes the account of this vision of the temple and of the witnesses, is particularly to be remarked:—

14. “ The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.”

This is as much as to say, the vision just presented to the prophet's view falls within the second woe; that is, it falls under the sixth trumpet, for we shall remember

the three last trumpets are called *woes*. Now, the second woe, or sixth trumpet, clearly related to the devastations of the Turks, which, as we saw, were to continue for three hundred and ninety-one years, and however these years are dated, they must have transpired with the seventeenth century; and previously to the close of that century, nothing but the Reformation, and its political consequences in Europe, had happened to answer to the death and resurrection of the witnesses, and the fall of a tenth part of the city.

I am of opinion, therefore, with Mr. Cuninghame, that this "chronological note" ascertains the meaning of the foregoing vision;—it is, in fact, the history of the church, from the setting up of the abomination of the popery till the time of the Reformation. After this, the world was quickly to expect the third woe, or the seventh trumpet. "Quickly" is certainly a relative term. Between the first and second *woes*, four centuries had intervened. The seventh trumpet will, in comparison of this interval, follow quickly the sixth: or "quickly," as usual, contrasts the revolutions of time with the eternal prospects of the people of God.

SECTION XIX.

The Seventh Trumpet.

Chap. xi. 15. "And the seventh angel sounded: and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become,"—or, "the kingdom of this world is become,"—"the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and

worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament,"—or, "covenant,"—"and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and a great hail."

WE now reach the last grand period of time which fills up the history of mankind till the appearance of Christ. But I think it will appear, from what follows, that these verses are merely introductory, and contain a prospective view of the whole contents of the trumpet. The "great voices from heaven" and the song of the "elders" evidently *anticipate* the issue of the various transactions of the seventh trumpet: for they raise the shouts of salutation as though the kingdom of God were actually come. And the seventh trumpet certainly brings in that glorious era; not, however, at its commencement, but as the final consequence of the judgments it denounces. The trumpet itself is a woe trumpet, containing the seven last plagues of God, represented by seven angels pouring out each his vial of wrath; and from a comparison of the seventh seal—where it divides itself into seven trumpets—I conceive we must wait for the resumption of the chronological order of prophetic events, till we come to the description of these vials: with the first vial begins the narrative of the seventh trumpet.

We are here told, generally, the contents of this wonderful era, before the completion of which the Almighty takes to himself his great power and doth reign. *First,*

is marked the anger of the nations; doubtless that time of trouble so distinctly marked in the prophecies of Daniel and of our Lord. But it is the season of *God's* wrath too; doubtless that day of righteous vengeance which destroys the nations and their armies, so much the theme of prophecy from its very commencement. *Lastly*, the resurrection of the dead is marked as an occurrence to take place during this period; evidently the first resurrection, for the prophets and all that fear God receive here their exceeding great reward. And the destruction of them that destroy the earth, being mentioned in connexion with the judgment of the dead, reminds us of those prophecies we have met with before, which seem to predict, that great persecutors and oppressors receive, at this time, the sentence of their eternal doom. The sight of the ark of the covenant, in the temple of God, inasmuch as that ark was a type of the Redeemer's throne, the throne of Israel's King, who is to arise and inherit all nations, I conceive to be symbolical of the glorious kingdom that is to succeed the destruction of them that destroy the earth. It is manifested in the midst of awful judgments, "lightning," "voices," "thunderings," and "great hail."

SECTION XX.

The Third Interlude: Chapters xii., xiii., and xiv., containing the History and Characters of the chief Actors and Victims in this last Trumpet.

BUT before we are called to see the symbols of these last judgments more at large, which properly compose the

seventh trumpet, or the third woe, we are, first, in a variety of visionary representations, made better acquainted with the several parties engaged in these last conflicts, with their histories and with their characters, and are enabled to perceive in what attitude they meet the last grand crisis of the manifestation of the judgment of God. Thus, in the next vision, which forms the twelfth chapter, we are made to resume the history of man's redemption from the very first; we review, from its commencement, the raging of that hostility which the first promise announced, between the serpent and the woman, and "between her seed and his seed:"—

1. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

This is plainly symbolical of the mystic Eve, the mother of all the living; that is to say, she is an emblem of the church of God.¹

"And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

We are familiar with this mystical representation in the ancient Scriptures. To the mystic Eve, the ideal mother of all the regenerated people of God, A SEED,—a particular seed or offspring, called, by way of eminence, the WOMAN'S SEED—was to be born; and, on the birth

¹ "She is represented as being clothed with the sun, to denote that her spiritual nakedness is only clothed by the righteousness of Christ: as standing upon the moon, which, like herself, is a symbol of the church; to mark that she shines only with a borrowed light, being naturally a dark opaque body," &c.—FABER.

of this child, all the hopes of the long waiting people of God were made to depend : * —

3. “ And there appeared another wonder in heaven ; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.”

We are expressly told, in verse the ninth, that this dragon is the old serpent, called “ the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” But it is also evident, that he is here represented as actuating the fourth beast of Daniel, and carrying on his operations through it, as his visible instrument. He is, accordingly, identified with this beast, as he was identified, in his sentence in Paradise, with that serpent in whose form he had tempted mankind.

A symbol of the fourth empire, in all its extent and duration, is certainly before us. Its seven heads represent it in all its forms of government, from its earliest kings to its latest emperors, of whatever description, for so these heads are elsewhere explained. The ten horns, as we have also learned, are symbols of ten sovereignties, into which the empire is at last divided. And the tail drawing the third part of the stars of heaven is meant to denote the apostasy of the Christian clergy of the empire : so that Rome, *from first to last*, is, as it were, painted on the red dragon. But we have a very distinctive mark whereby to judge of the particular time meant to be pointed out : the crowns are upon the *heads* of the beast. It is, then, Rome, not yet divided, but under one of its supreme forms of government, that we are to contemplate as the body possessed by the great adversary on the occasion intended to be symbolized.

* Isaiah, ix. 6, &c.

We distinguish, also, what time is meant, by the situation of the other symbol: the church is as a woman in travail, that draweth nigh the time of her delivery; that is, the Messiah is not yet born, but speedily expected. We are, therefore, placed at the eve of the first advent:—

4. “And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it should be born. And she brought forth a manchild, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand and two hundred and threescore days.”

We have here a general sketch of the history of the church from the era of the incarnation. The anxious mother was not disappointed; she brought forth the promised child, the very child that was to rule all nations.¹ The God of this world feared this, and therefore actuated the ruling powers of the earth, all of whom, at that time, were of Roman appointment, or acted by Roman authority, to destroy this predestined king as

¹ I most confidently follow Dean Woodhouse in considering the birth of the manchild brought forth by the woman to denote the actual nativity of our Lord; and am surprised, while the following passages stand on record, that Messrs. Faber and Cuninghame should deem it incongruous to the universal phraseology of Scripture. Gen. iii. 15. Here Christ is the Seed of Eve, and Eve a type of

the church. In the promise to Abraham, the phraseology of Scripture makes Christ the Son of the Father of the faithful. Isaiah, ix. 6, may be called a parallel passage to the one before us: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder.” And does not the Scripture, in many places, refer to him as “the First-born among many brethren?”

soon as he should be born. This, accordingly, he attempted by Herod, and thought he had effected by Pontius Pilate. But what is the event? THE SON OF MAN, raised from the dead, is caught up to the throne of God, where, as ancient prophets foretold; he is to "sit till all his enemies have been made his footstool." With respect to the mystic mother, who is left on earth, she must not yet expect to see her seed bruise the serpent's head, and inherit all nations. To her cost, she must still be exposed to the enmity of the serpent; and, in particular, must prepare for a concealment of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, the period long ago predicted of the reign and tyranny of her adversaries.

But we are to be shown, in a new, distinct set of images, how all this is brought about — how the mystic mother is persecuted — and at length driven to this her long banishment: —

7. "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not: 8. Neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10. And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

What is meant to be symbolized by this war in heaven has been matter of dispute. But the name of Michael—a symbol, as we learn from Daniel, of the Redeemer at the head of his holy angels,—and, especially, the congratulation of the voice, that the kingdom was now come, has led me to conclude, that it must either symbolize, directly, the last conflict itself, or that which would be a *type*, and might form an historical allègory of the last conflict. It cannot signify the last conflict itself, because, as appears from the following verses, the dragon still persecutes the woman. It must, then, symbolize some event that is a type of the last conflict, and of the succeeding kingdom of Christ. Such an event has already been shown in the abolition of the pagan authorities of the Roman empire, and in the substitution, in its stead, of the Christian empire under Constantine; and this event has, in the *sixth seal*, been already blazoned with all the symbolical imagery that could make it typical of that greater change one day to come to pass.

This, then, I conclude to be the event symbolized by this war in heaven between Michael and the dragon. It symbolizes, immediately, the casting down of the pagan authorities of Rome from their political heavens: the devil could no longer, through these instruments, carry on his persecution against the church: “their place was found no more in heaven:” and it might be said, that, for a time, the fourth beast *was not*, as an instrument in the hand of Satan, to oppose the interests of Christ’s kingdom. The great city, which ruleth over the kings of the earth, was, for a time, eclipsed and superseded. For the present, the governing powers of the Roman world might be congratulated on their escape from the abominable idolatries of their predecessors, and on their accession to

the true religion,—“ Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them:” and I think, from a comparison of the sixth seal, that, notwithstanding the personal character, perhaps, of Constantine himself, and the personal characters and wicked administration of some, perhaps of almost all, among his successors, the throne of Constantine, and the government of the Christian emperors of Constantinople, are viewed, in Scripture prophecies, as, with respect to an idolatrous world around, on the side of God—as, on the whole, notwithstanding the corrupt aims of some individual princes, favourable to the cause of the Gospel.¹ And this we may well esteem to have been the case, if, in this rest afforded to the churches throughout all the world, it could be said of some of them, though but of the most obscure—as was said of the churches of Judea and Samaria, after the persecution that arose on account of Stephen,—“ They were edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

We may reason, from analogy, that this was the case. The same prosperity that nurtured the seeds of apostasy, and brought into action the wicked pride and ambition of rulers and church governors, which have so disgraced the name of Christian, afforded peace and the quiet enjoyment of the means of grace to the poor of the flock; and

¹ “ It is certain that the Christians, in the time of Constantine, thought this prophecy to be so plainly fulfilled by the great event of Constantine’s advancement to the throne of the empire, that the emperor’s statue was set over his

palace gate, trampling upon a wounded dragon: and Constantine himself, in a letter to Eusebius, calls his conquest of Licinius the falling of the dragon, and the restoration of Christian liberty to all men.”—PYLE.

among these religion flourished, unknown to fame, unnoticed by history.

But, though not from the then imperial heavens, new enemies, successful as powerful, must arise, instigated by the same great adversary : —

12. “ Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that his time is short.”

So much of prophecy was now fulfilled, that the evil spirit might perceive his reign on earth was drawing to its close; for though the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the reign of the last triumphant adversaries of the church was yet to come, yet that was comparatively but a short period to him who, from the beginning, had boasted his power over the kingdoms of the earth : —

13. “ And when the devil saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

The gift of wings for flight seems to denote *preparation* for escape. The devil will prevail in this contest, but not to destroy. The Lord will conceal his chosen remnant from his pursuit.

His first effort, in his persecution of the woman, is thus designated : —

15. “ And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.”

I think there can be no question that this relates to something that took place before the mystic woman fled,

because then she was concealed from his sight: he saw her no longer—she had “fled from his face.” Now, if we inquire in history what was the next great danger that threatened the destruction of the church, after that revolution which released her from the persecution of the pagan authorities of the Roman empire, we shall immediately fix upon the invasions of the northern barbarians; and, recollecting that floods and inundations are, in prophetic language, standing symbols of an invading foe, we shall not hesitate to apply the prophecy here. The issue and consequences will be found also corresponding:—

16. “And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”

The extraordinary manner in which these barbarian and pagan nations were absorbed into the original population of the Roman provinces, so that instead of sweeping away the Christian church, as might have been expected, they fell at length into the ranks of her nominal supporters, exactly answers to this symbol. “As captive Greece,” observes a late author, “is said to have subdued her Roman conqueror, so Rome, in her own turn of servitude, cast the fetters of a moral captivity upon the fierce invaders of the north. Chiefly through the exertions of the bishops, whose ambition may be forgiven for its effects, her religion, her language, in part even her laws, were transplanted into the courts of Paris and Toledo, which became a degree less barbarous by imitation.”¹

¹ HALLAM's *State of Europe during the Middle Ages*. Compare PYLE.

17. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The woman with her seed are still a visible object of the dragon's hostility. "He goes to make war." This implies a settled and systematical plan of warfare. Observe, he is the great red dragon still, though not now in the political heavens of the world. But how he is still to be identified with the beast of seven heads and ten horns, prophecy and history will show. We know, from former prophecies, that some instrument of the powers of darkness is, in these last times, to make war against the saints of the Most High, and to prevail against them,—to prevail against, but not absolutely to destroy the mystic woman; for wings have been given her to fly away, and a place has been prepared for her, where she is to be nourished in secret for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. During this period, however, times and laws are given into his hands.

The next vision will show us the devil's instruments in this warfare:—

Chap. xiii. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of Blasphemy."

There can be no doubt that this represents the revived Roman empire in the west. Its rising from the sea may denote the situation of Europe: or rather, the conflict of nations out of which this fourth empire, which, for a time, was not, in a strict and proper sense, though it virtually survived in the authority of the Constantinopolitan emperors, again emerged in its own proper form.

But observe the difference! The crowns which were on the red dragon's heads are now seen on the *horns* of the revived beast. This exactly agrees with the symbol in Daniel's vision. The fourth empire was to come to exist in a divided state. "The ten horns of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." The sovereignty is in the divisions of the empire severally, not in the head; and these sovereignties are but parts of one empire. On the heads, moreover, is written the name of Blasphemy. Where the succession of Roman kings, consuls, tribunes, decemvirs, emperors, were seen, there "the name of Blasphemy is written." It had also been told to Daniel, "that great words should be spoken against the Most High." But of this part of the mysterious symbol we shall see more hereafter.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard;" an animal, though not of the noblest kind, fierce and subtle; "and his feet were as the feet of a bear:" to the prostrate foe, or to the people subjected to his sway, his dominion would be oppressive. And his mouth like the mouth of a lion, strong to devour. Or, perhaps, the lion's mouth, attached to such an animal, denotes that his claims and threats would exceed his actual powers.

"And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." The great red dragon, as we are told by the angel interpreter himself, is "the old serpent, called the Devil or Satan;" but, according to the symbol, we are to look for his visible operation in the combination of nations that form the Roman empire, and to the remains of that paganism and idolatry in the mass of the people, which had been driven from its government, when that government became Christian. He is "the spirit that now worketh in them that believe not." The

secret influence of paganism was still extensive, and, though cast from the imperial heavens, might well claim the throne of Rome as its own, and bestow it on a new combination of powers arising out of the conflicts of its nations. The old pagan empire is not, indeed, in form restored; but the idolatrous empire of Rome again revives, though disguised by the perversion of the Christian institutions. The same diabolical spirit aids it in its restoration; and though we see not the old red dragon again avowedly on the throne, but, as it were, still hidden in the mass of the people, the new powers act agreeably to his plans; and he, though not so immediately, is effectually the great mover in this new government of the western world.

“The red dragon,” therefore, and this “revived beast,” are both symbols of the same Roman empire, but in different stages of its history, and under a different mode of instigation from the old serpent. In the Roman pagan government he stood forth more confessed in his proper shape; but in the revived empire, though he still possesses the body of the beast which upholds the heads and the horns, he delegates the sovereign authority to others, and, working unseen, carries on his purposes by these his deceived instruments. In the subsequent visions, therefore, when the DRAGON is mentioned as distinct from the BEAST, we are to consider the latter as referring to the fourth empire, visibly seen in its governments; and, by the former, the prince of darkness personally, but more latently, working in the mass of the people of the fourth empire. And we may remark further, that though the heathen idolatry which opposed primitive Christianity, was, by the victories of Constantine, driven from the government of Rome; it never entirely ceased to

exist in the mass of the people of the fourth empire, down to the very times of popery and the Roman Catholic dynasties. Nay, the Roman Catholic Christianity took possession of many pagan nations, and remnants of pagan nations, by a kind of half compliance with the idolatrous usages and practices of the vulgar. This is, no doubt, what is symbolized in the prophecy before us by this *coalition* between the dragon and the beast. Christian Rome owed its recovered dominion over the nations of the earth to the influence of idolatry!

3. "And I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast."

Expositors, in the application of history to the explanation of this part of the symbol, have not all taken exactly the same view of the meaning of the prophecy. Few, however, have doubted that the head, "wounded, as it were, to death," and subsequently "healed," is the sixth head—the imperial government of the Cæsars. Some think that the deadly wound was given to this head, as it respected the city of Rome and the proper Roman empire, when Constantine overthrew the pagan persecutors, and removed the imperial government to Constantinople, reducing the city that had reigned over the kings of the earth to the condition of a provincial town. These authors consider this deadly wound to have been healed when the division of the empire into the east and west gave again to Rome a resident prince,* and restored to the great city her former sovereignty over the nations of her original empire. I should, how-

* A. D. 364.

ever, conceive, that removing merely the residence of the head of the imperial government to Constantinople cannot answer to the symbol of the wounding that head, as it were, to death; since the successors of Cæsar still reigned over Rome and the Roman world, nor had the seat of government, for some time before the accession of Constantine, been permanently fixed at Rome. I would rather interpret the deadly wound of the victories of the Goths in Italy, which terminated the western empire, and, for a time, interrupted the government of the Cæsars on their seven-hilled city.

There is something remarkable in the language of the symbol — one of its heads, *as it were*, wounded to death. The deposition of the Emperor Momyllus Augustulus,* and the abolition of the imperial government in Rome, was certainly very like the entire destruction of that form of government; but yet, from the particular circumstances of the Roman empire, it was not completely so: for though, for the time, lost to Rome, there was still a support of the vitality of the imperial government in the east; and it did in fact, without having been entirely extinct, again come to exercise sovereign authority at Rome. This came to pass when the victories of the generals of the Emperor Justinian restored the city to the dominion of that prince.¹ Then was the deadly wound which the sovereignty of the Cæsars in the imperial city had received by the sword of the Goths, “healed.” The sixth head revived, and the sovereignty of the successor

* A. D. 476.

¹ Belisarius entered Rome 536; it is again taken 546, but recovered the following year.

of Cæsar and Augustus continued in Rome until its revolt from the eastern empire.*

It is during this period, the revived dominion of the sixth head, that we are, in all probability, to mark the rise of the new *spiritual* empire of Rome, and from thence trace the consequent revelation of the “man of sin.” Somewhere within this period, perhaps, the date of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years will be found to commence: either under the reign of Justinian, at the beginning of the period:—as the occurrence of the late revolution in Europe, after the expiration of the term of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, has caused many to suspect:—or in the revolt of Gregory II., at its close, whom Gibbon calls “the founder of the papal monarchy.”†

Mr. Gibbon thus reviews this period of the history of the Roman city:—“Amidst the arms of the Lombards and under the despotism of the Greeks, we again inquire into the fate of Rome, which had reached, about the close of the sixth century, the lowest period of her oppression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree, under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither in the ground; the ministers of command and messengers of victory no longer met on the Appian and Flaminian way, the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt, and continually feared. The inhabitants of a potent and peaceful capital, who visit, without an anxious thought, the garden of the surround-

* A. D. 728.

† A. D. 727. Bishop Newton; Mr. Milner.

ing country, will faintly picture to their fancy the distress of the Romans. They shut or opened their gates with a trembling hand; beheld, from their walls, the flames of their houses, and heard the lamentations of their brethren, who were coupled together like dogs, and dragged away into distant slavery, beyond the sea and the mountains. Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion. A vague tradition was embraced, that two Jewish teachers, a tentmaker and a fisherman, had formerly been executed in the circus of Nero; and, at the end of five hundred years, their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Christian Rome. The pilgrims of the east and west resorted to the holy threshold; but the shrines of the apostles were guarded by miracles and invisible terrors; and it was not without fear that the pious Catholic approached the object of his worship. It was fatal to touch, it was dangerous to behold, the bodies of the saints; and those who, from the purest motives, presumed to disturb the repose of the sanctuary, were affrighted by visions or punished with sudden death."

What a remarkable comment does this description of the revival of the "eternal city," under the last period of the dominion of the eastern emperors, afford us of the latter part of the verse before us,—“And all the world wondered after the beast.” Rome, about this time, we see, begins to become the *object of idolatrous attachment* to the nations of the earth, which, I think, is a strong argument that we are to begin the date of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, with the healing of the wound of the sixth head of Rome, or soon after its

recovery, and before the new dominion stands forth in full maturity, with his seventh head and ten crowned horns; and—referring to Daniel's vision—before the eleventh horn comes up among them and subdues three kings: so that “the times and laws” are, perhaps, to be considered as “given into the hand of the little horn,” before his sovereignty attains its utmost height; or, in the language of the symbol that follows, before papal Rome is made into the image of the beast.

This seventh head of the Roman beast I consider to be the confirmed dominion of the northern barbarians over Rome and the west. The wound on the sixth head, from the sword of the Goths, was healed. The actual reign of the eastern Cæsars over Rome terminated with the revolt of the Italians in defence of the pope and the holy images,* but nominally continued till the coronation of Charlemagne,† the king of the Franks, and almost sole monarch of the barbarian nations that had settled within the limits of the Roman empire. Here was the seventh head,—the sceptre of Rome was now transferred from the successors of Cæsar and Augustus for ever, and the feudal empire of the barbarian monarchs succeeds.

At first, as we shall see more particularly hereafter, the northern barbarian conquerors supply a *crowned head* to the empire: such was Charlemagne. He is justly esteemed in history the “restorer of the western empire.” He actually ruled, with undivided authority, Rome and the greater part of the Roman empire in Europe. But this state of things lasted but a very little while: the unity of his empire may be said to have almost ended with his reign; and from the empire of Charlemagne have

* A. D. 728.

† A. D. 800.

sprung the present Roman Catholic sovereignties of Europe. Hence the leopard beast of the sea, in the vision before, is shown as fully developed, with seven heads indeed, but the crowns are not on the heads, but on ten horns.

The monarchies of Roman Catholic Europe, with the titular Roman emperor at their head, are clearly, therefore, this beast whom St. John saw rising out of the sea. It answers to the feet and toes, part of iron and part of clay, in Nebuchadnezzar's image, and is the same with the fourth beast in Daniel's dream, as shown in its latest position. It, further, illustrates the prophecy of Ezekiel, which represents Magog—the father of the Scythians—as at the head of the sons of Japheth, and as supplying a leader—Gog—to the last enemies of the church of God, though that enemy, in former prophecies, was announced to come from Chittim.

“And all the world,” says St. John, in the passage we are considering, “wondered after the beast.”

We may justly say that the revived Roman empire, the commonwealth of Europe, became the admiration of the world. But, what was worse, the nations, though nominally Christian, discovered a disposition to pay idolatrous adoration to the God of this world, and to the new powers installed in his seat: and Rome, as we have seen, was made the grand instrument of the new idolatry.

4. “They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

“The generality of the subjects of these idolatrous Christian governments,” observes Mr. Pyle, “soon ran

into compliance with, and admiration of, the prevailing powers, and submitted to all their superstitious injunctions, and thereby, in effect, became the subjects of that old serpent, the first deceiver of mankind." Or we may say, with truth, the pagan or semi-pagan inhabitants of western Europe, and more especially its barbarian invaders, never became actually the converts to Christianity till that religion had been debased into a kindred idolatry by the apostate church. They still worshipped the dragon; but they refused not to worship the beast too, when, through Satanic influence, their own superstitions had placed him in the seat of the dragon. And they might well exclaim: "Who is able to make war with him?" For the fact was, that several pagan nations in Europe only submitted to baptism on the failure of their strength to resist the sword of Christian princes. Charlemagne, the restorer of the western empire, was remarkably distinguished by such military missions.

5. "And there was given unto him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months, and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

If we compare this with what we read to the same effect in Daniel's vision, we shall find that what was there attributed to the eleventh little horn, is here attributed to the beast generally: so that the fourth empire, as represented by the present symbol, is to be considered as *including* that particular power, to whom the blaspheming and boasting mouth was ascribed in Daniel; and we seem confirmed in the notion, that the reign of the fourth

empire in its last state, and the reign of papacy, are to be considered as coeval, that they rise and fall together, or nearly so, whether we are to date the one thousand two hundred and sixty years — from the healing of the deadly wound of the sixth head — from the rise of the seventh head — or from the transfer of its sovereignty to its ten horns.

8. “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world.”

“They that dwell upon the earth;” that is, the former professors of the Christian religion.

We shall necessarily remember here the words of our Saviour Christ, how he said that there should arise false Christs and false prophets, and should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. In the vision before us, it is expressly shown that the elect, and none but the elect, escape that delusion which pervades the whole western world on the occasion of the revival of the fourth empire. And this shows to us, with most awful certainty, the damnable nature of the Roman superstition, wherever it prevails.

9. “If any man hath an ear to hear, let him hear.”

This calls the general attention to what follows:—

10. “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

A just retribution awaits the persecutors of God’s people. Often, indeed, in the history of individual persecutors, has the retaliating hand of Providence been

visible; and the same avenging hand will one day be seen in the destruction of this last persecuting empire, though it continues to reign for twelve hundred and sixty years. In waiting for this event, the "faith" of the saints is exercised, and the "patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever." We now proceed to another object of the prophetical vision:—

11. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doth great wonders, so that he maketh"—or, "in order that he may make"—"fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he hath power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live, and he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, bond and free, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six."

Much has been written, by late expositors, in explanation of these symbols, agreeing pretty well, upon the whole, though with some variations and discrepancies in particular points. For the more detailed investigation of the subject, I would refer the reader to the works of these writers, and shall content myself with tracing the

general outline of the fulfilment of the prophecy, as I think I see it drawn on the page of history. In the first place, it is certain that we must not look out of the precincts of the Roman empire for the power symbolized by this second beast; because this empire is, according to Daniel's visions, the last power that opposes itself to the church of God: the divided state is also the last stage of the existence of this last empire. In the days of these kings, the Most High is to set up his kingdom.

We must, therefore, look for some power arising within the revived empire, represented by the first beast: and this, indeed, seems plain from what is said in the vision before us,—the “exercising of the power of the first beast before him.” The worship before said to be given to the first beast is here said to be procured for him by the second beast, through the deceptions which he should practise upon mankind.

Now, history does certainly discover to us, in the reviving Roman empire, a power that may well be believed to answer to the symbol of this second beast. This was the great body of the apostate clergy of Christendom¹, who formed, by the vast immunities they enjoyed, a distinct state, or incorporated society, in the midst of the western empire.

The ecclesiastical state was truly an empire within an empire, united together by many firm links of common interest and common principles, so as to be one compact

¹ The head of the second beast I would interpret, with the authors referred to, below, of the pope, or rather the patriarch of the west—not yet pope,—as the head of the Roman Catholic clergy; and the

two horns I would decipher of the two great and very distinct bodies of ecclesiastics, the regular and the secular clergy.

See Bishop Newton, Messrs. Faber and Cuninghame.

body, commensurate with the whole Roman world, and having its ramifications in every separate state that was comprised within the divided empire.

Deriving all the pretension it had to authority from the apostles of Jesus Christ and their successors in the ministry of the word, the ecclesiastical state of apostate Christendom might justly be symbolized by a lamb; but the doctrines and precepts of the apostles had been totally exchanged for doctrines and precepts of hellish origin: it might, therefore, be said, though in appearance a lamb, to speak like a dragon. The exercising all the power of the first beast before him, is illustrated by every page of the early history of modern Europe, in the situation in which we find the leading members of the ecclesiastical state, with respect to the temporal sovereigns of the revived Roman empire. Every where they had engrossed all civil and political authority into their own hands, not only as the leaders of a popular superstition, which was the true support of their own proper authority, but as the counsellors and prime ministers of princes, in virtue of the sovereign power of the state entrusted into their hands.

The wealth, the acquired jurisdiction of the church, and its political influence, mark, in history, the rise of the ecclesiastical states. "At the irruption of the northern invaders into the Roman empire," says Mr. Hallam, "they found the clergy already endowed with extensive possessions." "The devotion of the conquering nations, as it was still less enlightened than that of the subjects of the empire, so was it still more munificent. They left, indeed, the worship of Hesus and Saranis in their forests; but they retained the elementary principles of that and of all barbarous idolatry, a superstitious reverence for the

priesthood, a credulity that seemed to invite imposture, and a confidence in the efficacy of gifts to expiate offences." Hence the enormous wealth of the ecclesiastical body. "They enjoyed," says the same author, "nearly one half of England, and, I believe, a greater portion in some countries of Europe." Mr. Hallam next traces, from the "arbitrative authority of ecclesiastial pastors," which, as he observes, "was coeval with Christianity itself, and was natural, and even necessary, in an insulated and persecuted society," the extensive jurisdiction at length acquired by the clergy. He proceeds to remark:—

"In this sketch of the riches and jurisdiction of the hierarchy, I may seem to have implied their political influence, which is naturally connected with the two former. They possessed, however, more direct means of acquiring temporal power. Even under the Roman emperors they had found their road into palaces; they were sometimes ministers, more often secret counsellors; always necessary but formidable allies, whose support was to be conciliated, and interference to be respected. But they assumed a far more decided influence over the kingdoms of the west." "The bishops acquired and retained a great part of their ascendancy by a very respectable instrument of power, intellectual superiority. They alone were acquainted with the art of writing, and they were entrusted with political correspondence, and with the framing of laws. They alone knew the elements of a few sciences; and the education of royal families devolved upon them as a necessary duty." "The power obtained by national churches, through the superstitious prejudices then received, and a train of favourable circumstances, was as dangerous to civil government as the

subsequent usurpations of the Roman pontiff, against which Protestant writers are apt too exclusively to direct their animadversions. Voltaire, I think, has remarked, that the ninth century was the age of the bishops, as the eleventh and twelfth was of the popes. It seemed as if Europe was about to pass under as absolute a dominion of the hierarchy as had been exercised by the priesthood of ancient Egypt, or the Druids of Gaul."

It is to the members of the ecclesiastical state, thus entrusted, in their several kingdoms, with the authority of the temporal sovereign, that we may justly ascribe the idolatrous devotion of the multitude to the false religion of the revived beast. In the various practices of the Roman Catholic clergy, so conspicuous on the page of history,—in their pretended miracles and claims to command the judgments of Heaven,—and in all the insidious arts of their seducing spirits,—we read an explanation of the thirteenth and former part of the fourteenth verse.¹

"The image of the beast" I conceive to symbolize the vaunted apostolical see, or the personal government and dominion of the pope and court of Rome.² The erection of this "sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter," as Mr. Gibbon calls it, may justly be ascribed to the general influence of the apostate clergy all over Europe. My idea, therefore, of the image of the beast nearly resembles that of Mr. Cuninghame. It is the spiritual imperial sway given by the artifice of the apostate clergy to the holy Roman church—mother and mistress—over all other churches and nations,—it is, in fact, a new empire,

¹ Compare Bishop Newton and Bishop Hurd.

² So Bishop Newton.

challenged for the city which formerly ruled over the kings of the earth. The papal government is, moreover, a very exact *imitation*, in many of its leading institutions and forms, of the ancient imperial government, especially of that of Justinian and his successors. Hence, I conceive, it is called “an image of the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live.”

Papal Rome is, indeed, but a mere image of imperial Rome; it has no real power or authority over the nations, but is in itself a very small and weak state—a little horn among the regal horns of the fourth beast. The apostate church, however,—the ecclesiastical state—armed, as it was, in the several kingdoms of Europe with the civil and political authority, was able to give life to this image of imperial Rome, the city that had reigned over the kings of the earth; so that Rome actually attained to a new dominion in Europe. To use the language of Mr. Gibbon:—“*After the loss of her legions and provinces, the genius and fortune of the popes again restored the supremacy of Rome.*” Or, in the language of Mr. Hallam:—“While the prelates of these nations, each within his respective sphere, were prosecuting their system of encroachment upon the laity, a new scheme was secretly forming within the bosom of the church, to enthrall both that and the temporal governments of the world under an *ecclesiastical monarch.*”

It will be evident, however, to every reader of history, that this more than kingly supremacy, in itself an empty pretension, received all its validity and support from the apostate priesthood. “The spiritual thunders of the Vatican,” says the historian of the declining empire of Rome, “depended on the force of opinion; and if that opinion be supplanted by reason or passion, the sound

may idly waste itself in the air, and the helpless priest is exposed to the brutal violence of a noble or plebeian adversary." By means, however, of the Roman Catholic clergy, and especially of the regular or monastic orders, the authority of papal Rome was maintained with a high hand, for ages, in all the kingdoms of the beast. They had power to cause that the image of the beast should both speak, and speak with effect; nay, they were enabled to give such power and authority to the decrees and bulls of "the helpless priest," *whom they had clothed in the imperial purple*,¹ as to "cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

In explanation of the sixteenth verse, we may refer, with many expositors, to the observations of Grotius,—
"That it was customary, in the time of St. John, for every heathen god to have a particular fraternity, or society, belonging to him; and the way of admitting any into these fraternities, was, first, by giving the candidate some hieroglyphic mark in his hand or forehead, which was accounted sacred to that particular god; as that of an ivy leaf for Bacchus: secondly, by sealing them with the letters of the name of that God: and, thirdly, with that number which the Greek letters of their name did make up; for the numerical letters of the Greeks were the letters of the alphabet."

The plain import of this text will then be, that unless the inhabitants of the Roman world would receive the badges of the beast, and worship the image which the ecclesiastics, by the power of the several sovereignties of the revived Roman empire, entrusted to their hands, had set up, they would not be permitted to exercise

¹ Gibbon.

the common offices of civil life. As history has explained, they would be excommunicated as heretical, and expelled from the society of men.

That the Spirit of prophecy meant literally some particular mark, to be really imprinted on the hand and on the forehead, I cannot conceive; the public profession and acknowledgment of the Romish religion, or of its essential errors and practices, is all that is intended. Thus the hundred and forty and four thousand, the followers of the Lamb, have also their Father's name written on their foreheads. And though the Protestant commentators have said many striking things respecting the sign of the cross, as used by the Papists, yet this cannot be what is meant, because the sign of the cross was not of papistical origin: nor is it the distinguishing mark between the Romish and other communities of Christians, as those of the eastern churches in particular: nor was the signing of the cross ever imposed as the touchstone of conformity by the Roman Catholic persecutors: and, what is more, these symbols must be interpreted as denoting marks of perdition, co-extensive with the universal influence of the apostasy. For, as will be seen hereafter, "to get the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name," is for the Christian to make his calling and election sure. These symbols must, therefore, include all the corruptions of the truth, and all the delusions of false religion which exist in these latter days, whether among Papists or among Protestants.*

With respect to the number of the name, nothing can be more satisfactory than what is found in Irenæus, who lived not long after the time of St. John. "The name

* See on Isaiah, lviii., lix.

LATEINOS, (the Greek way of spelling Latinus, or Latin,) contains the number six hundred and sixty-six, and it is very likely, because the last kingdom is so called, for they are Latins that now reign." "The thing," says Bishop Newton, "agrees to admiration, for, after the division of the empire, the Greeks and other orientalists called the people of the western church, or church of Rome, Latins. As Dr. Henry More expresses it, they *Latinize* in every thing," &c.

We have just read a description of the chief agents, demoniacal and human, which were suffered to triumph over the truth during that remarkable prophetic era, one thousand two hundred and sixty years. The old serpent, or Satan, was the prime mover in this last warfare against the saints of the Most High. But the revived Roman empire, acting under the influence of the apostate clergy, erecting at length, in its ancient capital, the abomination of the papacy, were to be the visible instruments employed; and so, we may say, it has come to pass.

We are next presented with a visionary representation of that heavenly kingdom prepared above, which is soon to be manifested on earth: as was told to Daniel,—
"And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Chap. xiv. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name,"—or, "having his name and the name of his Father,"¹—"written on their foreheads."

¹ Griesbach.

We cannot mistake the meaning of this symbol. He who hath bought to himself the church with his own blood—who died a victim upon the altar, as a sin-offering, for his people—the same is he who cometh as the Lord from heaven to execute vengeance. And, lo! his saints, “the holy myriads,” are with him; “the hundred and forty-four thousand,” the same that was stated to be the number of the Israel of God, in the seventh chapter, whether mystically or literally we cannot say; but the hundred and forty and four thousand are a symbol of the number of God’s elect now ready to be accomplished. St. John hears the song of triumph that congratulates these happy beings:—

“And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.”

We may illustrate from St. Paul: “Eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” The elect of God are further characterized:—

4. “These are they which are not defiled with women; for they are virgins.”

That is to say, in the world below, through which they have passed on their pilgrimage, they retained the pure worship of God. For adultery is a standing emblem in Scripture for idolatrous worship; and the visible

church, as now contrasted with the church of the first-born written in heaven, had drank deeply of the cup of the fornications of the mystic Babylon, "the mother of harlots." As we read before, those that were written in the Lamb's book of life had not, like all the world besides, wondered after the beast:—

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

"Through honour and dishonour, through good report and ill report," &c. It has been remarked that there is, in this place, an allusion to the oath of the Roman soldiers, part of which was to follow their generals wheresoever they should lead:—

"These are redeemed"—or, "purchased"—"from among men."

A plain declaration that the people of God owe their salvation to a special and particular redemption in the blood of Christ—"being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." That is to say, God's consecrated portion of the human race, while the rest are left to common purposes:—"Of his own will begat he us, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."

5. "In their mouth was found no guile,"—or, "no lie,"¹—"for they were without fault before the throne of God,"—or rather, "for they were without spot."²

They were uncontaminated with those damnable delusions which had desolated the visible church, and which had reigned triumphant during the pilgrimage of many of them on earth.

¹ Griesbach.

² Ἀμωμοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν.

6. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water."

A new era seems to be here pointed out in the history of the true and spiritual church—among those who belong to the Jerusalem that is above, an era marked by the more universal proclamation of the everlasting Gospel, not only to the nations of the professed church, but to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. No doubt, in thus extending the preaching of his Gospel, the usual design of God will be accomplished, in gathering, individually, the number of his elect; but we seem to have here pointed out two *public* purposes, if we may so speak, in this general proclamation. First, to prepare all nations for the hour of God's judgment, which is fast approaching—the long predicted judgment of God on the apostate churches of the west and on the Roman or fourth empire. Secondly, that the heathen may be called to worship their Creator, and be prepared for the coming of his kingdom, into which, as nations, they are to be gathered, at the coming of the great King, agreeably with the predictions of our Lord himself: "and the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all nations, and then shall the end come."

And when we consider the extensive means and abundant provision now made by Bible and Missionary societies for the evangelizing of the heathen nations of the earth, all which mighty instruments of good have sprang up, as it were, on a sudden, within our memory,

and are, at this present time, spreading the knowledge of revelation to a wider extent than has ever yet taken place, who can forbear to exclaim, Behold a remarkable sign of the coming of Christ, and of the end of the present dispensation!

8. "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Evidently a prophecy of the destruction of Rome. It may be of the city itself, as the next angel seems to make a distinct judgment of her votaries:—

9. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

If the city of Rome itself be first an object of vengeance, the whole Roman world, still bearing the marks of her dominion and superstition, or of some fruits of her apostasy, is soon involved in her doom. "I beheld then," says Daniel, "because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

12. "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

That is, this is the grand judgment of the adversaries, for which the people of God have been directed to wait, in every age—"patiently committing themselves to God in well doing."

13. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

We have seen, from the oracles of God all along, that the resurrection of the just is part of the business of the second advent. Thus it was intimated above, when the songs of heaven offered congratulations at the *sounding* of the seventh trumpet, that "the time of the dead was come, that they should be judged, and that God should give reward unto his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear his name, small and great."

It is to this blessed resurrection that the proclaiming voice we now hear has reference: "Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea assuredly, saith the Spirit, when they rest from their labours:" that is, this matter the word of inspiration has already declared, namely, that the dead who sleep in Jesus are blessed,—but *more*, "and their works do follow them." *They* lose not the fruits of their labours, who, patiently waiting for their Lord, and diligently occupying till he should come, have fallen asleep in death before that day arrived. They now appear, and stand before their Master with all the talents they have gained, the labourers in the vineyard to receive the reckoning, the builders to have their work examined—as to their personal claims upon their Lord on its account,—whether it be of wood, hay, stubble, or whether it be of gold, and silver, and precious:

stones, that each man "may receive his own reward according to his own work."

I cannot, indeed, but hold it to be unscriptural and erroneous to say, that there is a judgment of works whereby the character of God's people, *as such*, is to be ascertained at the day of his coming, or by which God's justice is to be vindicated in the rewarding of his people, as some speak. Because the blessed dead were, long before, ascertained to belong to Christ; ay, and the living servants of Christ too, who had made their calling and election sure, and were sealed by the Spirit. In the case of those, indeed, who shall survive to the coming of Christ, a public declaration that divides them from unsound professors, is to be expected,—according as their work shall be true or false will this declaration be. But God's justice, in the gift of eternal life unto his elect, is not justified by their good works, but by the sacrifice and merits of the death of Christ, made sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him.

But although, I humbly conceive, in all the transactions of awarding eternal life and glory—even full conformity in body and soul to the only begotten of the Father—the reward is reckoned simply and solely "of grace," and "no more of works;" yet I think it clear from Scripture, that there is a rewarding of certain services besides, at the resurrection of the just, of certain services which particular persons have been called to perform for Christ and his cause. The service of the ministry is particularly pointed out, "with promise" of some peculiar reward, in many parts of Scripture. And analogy leads us to add, other gifted servants of Christ, who, foregoing their private interests for their Master's

sake, have lived for the good of others, will find a happy acknowledgment of their services. The parables of the labourers and of the talents seem to show this.

If we regard the state of Christ's destined kingdom now upon earth, there are the King's people and the King's own servants,—we might say, in the eastern style, his slaves: there is “God's husbandry,” and there are God's labourers;” there is “God's building,” and there are God's “builders:” and though some, for filthy lucre's sake, have taken charge of the flock, and got *their* reward; and others, by feigned words, have made merchandise of the professing people of God, and grown rich; yet it has been very frequently the lot of Christ's faithful servants to bear their witness in sackcloth. Even in a peaceful and flourishing state of the church, it has been sometimes seen how poorly paid are Christ's labourers, if you have respect to the earthly provision made for themselves and those who must depend on them. Their Master is too generous to forget this when he shall return. He seems to speak in the language of his servant: “I have written it with my own hand, I will repay it; albeit I do not say to thee, how thou owest unto me even thine ownself besides.”

How many faithful servants of Christ, who have given themselves up wholly to his service, may, in their measure, take up the language of St. Paul to the people whom they have served: “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us:”—“We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised,” &c. &c. Called into his vineyard at this eleventh hour, when the burden and heat of the day is over, the labourers, that now are, cannot, indeed, compare

with the apostles and primitive martyrs in their sacrifices and sufferings; but still they have their share, and, if faithful, are ready to forego their worldly interest, that they may fulfil the work of their ministry; and their Master has intimated he will give to them all the same wages. Though their labours meet with no reward in the church below, they will be rewarded at the resurrection of the just. As St. Peter says unto faithful pastors: "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And more distinctly still St. Paul, addressing ministers of the word: "If a man's work abide that he hath built, he shall receive a reward: if a man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but himself shall be saved, but so as by fire."—"Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."*

The glorifying of the elect people of God, as such, when Christ shall appear, and his rewarding of his own servants among them, who, for his and their sakes, have spent and been spent on earth, are two circumstances of the judgment of the first advent ever to be kept distinct in our view. In the one case, as we have remarked before, the reward is reckoned of grace, and not of debt; in the other case, however grace may mingle itself with it, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

If it be asked, Since the perfection of glory, the likeness of Christ, be gratuitously awarded unto all the elect, how can his ministers and public servants have a greater reward? We may answer, from something more than

* 1 Cor. iii.

conjecture, employment: more extensive trusts in his future kingdom upon earth: "Thou hast been faithful in a few things, be thou ruler over many."

Is it asked, will every labour of love that is showed, by whomsoever of God's people, in ministering to his saints, meet with a reward of this kind in the world to come? To this I would not reply decidedly; but certainly, either here or hereafter every labour of love will be remembered: "A cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward." But I think, except with regard to Christ's public servants, and some particular acts of devotion to his cause, the Scripture seems to assign "the hundred fold reward" to the spiritual enjoyments of this present world.* But to return to our subject. The dead in Christ arise, and this, agreeably to other Scriptures, is in order to their being brought with Christ at the day of his appearing and kingdom.

14. "And I looked, and, behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

I adopt, with great satisfaction, Mr. Cuninghame's interpretation of this passage, and shall beg leave to give it in his own words: "The coming of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven, or, as St. Luke expresses it,

* Mark, x: 30.

‘with a cloud,’ is an event frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. It occurs in the prophecies of Daniel,* and in our Lord’s discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.† It is also predicted at the beginning of the Apocalypse. This advent of Christ seems evidently to be intended in the passage before us. The symbolical reaping of the harvest of the earth, which is performed by our Lord, I consider to signify the ‘gathering together of his elect from the four winds of heaven,’ which he himself assures us ‘will take place immediately on his coming with the clouds of heaven.’ The action of reaping is more than once used as a symbol of the gathering in of Christ’s elect, but never, as far as I remember, as a symbol of the execution of divine judgments. ‘The gathering of the elect,’ here predicted under the image of reaping a harvest of corn or wheat, immediately precedes the harvest of the vintage, (mentioned in the following verses,) which is every where in the prophetic writings used as a symbol of the wrath of God. The gathering of the elect is, accordingly, also alluded to in the nineteenth chapter, where a more full description of the vintage is given: the allusion to it is in the ninth verse: ‘Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.’ In the above explanation of the symbolical wheat harvest, I entirely differ from Mede, Bishop Newton, and other writers, and also from Mr. Faber. I have, however, the happiness to coincide with the eminently learned Bishop Horsley, who applies the harvest, as I do, to the gathering of the elect, mentioned by our Lord as taking place upon his advent with the clouds of heaven. The dead in Christ

* Chap. vii. 13.

† Matt. xxiv. 20; Mark, xiii. 26; Luke, xxi. 27.

shall first rise; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

17. "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God; and the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

All are agreed that this *harvest of the vintage* represents the last judgment of God, which, in so particular a manner, is noticed in many Scriptures as finishing God's controversy with the nations. It can, indeed, be none other than the destruction of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, the Roman empire that now is, the nations of papal Europe,—“His body was given to the burning flame.” And we remark that the angel that has power of *fire* is stated, in the passage before us, to be present. As, however, we shall find afterwards a more particular delineation of this dreadful conflict, we need not here dwell upon the subject. I shall only, therefore, remark, that sixteen hundred furlongs, or stadia, is found to be the exact length of the Holy Land, which country many Scriptures which we have examined pointed out as the scene of the grand final overthrow of the mortal

* Page 317.

enemies of Christ and of his church. This country also is *without* the mystical city.

Such is what we may call the ecclesiastical history of the seventh, the last trumpet.

SECTION XXI.

The Preparation for the pouring out of the Seven Vials.

THE fourteenth chapter, which we last considered, may be called a general survey of the domestic history of the church and of the kingdom of Christ, during the period of the seventh trumpet. The more general preaching of the Gospel—the fall of Babylon—the calamities of her votaries—the resurrection of the just—the gathering of the elect—the final destruction of the apostates and their armies, are marked as so many steps of its progress and manifestation upon earth. But we have not yet entered upon the regular order of prophetic events which compose this last woe-trumpet, as they affect the nations upon earth, and prepare them for the awful catastrophe.

Each of the six seals, it will be remembered, with the seventh, branching out into its seven trumpets, showed us so many successive periods in the history of the fourth empire and of the civilized world. So we shall find the seventh trumpet, branching out into seven vials, continues the history of this same fourth empire—now existing in its last divided state—until the time in which it falls in the great day of the battle of Almighty God, when the stone smites the image, and the whole fabric of human power and authority is destroyed for ever.

Chap. xv. "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous; seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

In deciphering the symbol of the sea of glass mingled with fire, we may refer to the scenery of the Jewish sanctuary; and understand by the sea the laver which stood between the altar and the most holy place. On this supposition, the triumphant church of God is represented as ready to be delivered unto God the Father, being now, through the blood and Spirit of the Redeemer, perfected in holiness. Or we may explain the symbol: this sea, now calm as a molten looking glass, but still glistening with the fiery indignation that had lately disturbed it, is to be considered as the antitype of the Red Sea, in that day when Israel came out of Egypt, and saw their adversaries dead on the sea shore. Thus explained, the emblem shows the issue of these last plagues: the church will be delivered for ever out of the captivity of the spiritual Egypt, and shall look in triumph on its last persecutor, fallen to rise no more. This last interpretation seems to be corroborated by the style of the following verses, where an allusion is evidently made to the inspired song of Moses, which he taught to the children of Israel when they had reached in safety the opposite shore.¹

3. "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy

¹ LOWMAN. BISHOP NEWTON.

works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints,—or, “of the nations.”¹—Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”

All this, however, let us remember, is in *anticipation* only of the final issue of these last judgments about to be poured out:—

5. “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened; and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts,”—or, “living creatures,”—“gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.”

This reminds us of the dedication of the tabernacle by Moses, and of the temple by Solomon.* On both these occasions, the sanctuary was filled with a cloud and with the glory of Jehovah; so that his ministering servants could not enter therein. The vision, therefore, symbolizes the manifested presence of Jehovah, which, according to ancient prophecies, is to be revealed as of old, in his tabernacle, which is to be again pitched upon earth. But this is not to be seen of men till these plagues are over.

¹ GRIESBACH.

* Exod. xl. 34, 35; 1 Kings, viii. 10, 11.

SECTION XXII.

The First Vial.

Chap. xvi. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

ALL things considered, I accede to the opinion of Mr. Faber and Mr. Cuninghame — but posterity will judge — that this is the revolutionary, atheistical mania that, in our day, has disturbed, from their very foundations, the kingdoms of the Latin or Roman Catholic world, has deluged Europe in blood, and hath plunged in afflictions, hardly to be paralleled in the page of human history, disastrous as it is, the most civilized nations of the earth.

The breaking out and spreading of those licentious principles from which all this has sprung, might well be symbolized by an epidemic, like the plague, suddenly breaking out and raging over the Roman world. France, the Netherlands, southern Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, have been the chief scenes of the noisome and deadly pestilence. It is a distemper of which it may be justly doubted whether the European family can ever be radically cured; and there is too much reason to suspect that great and violent political changes, leading to strong and oppressive military governments, will complete the

sad history of the fourth empire, and help to fill up the measure of its iniquity.

So great a revolution in sentiment and political feeling has, perhaps, never before taken place among civilized nations. It seems, indeed, in a great measure, to have altered the leading characteristics of apostate Christendom. Infidelity, atheism, and contempt of all authority, civil and religious, if not substituted in the room of the ancient credulity and superstition, have been, in a remarkable manner, blended with them: and this is a change that many of the prophecies we have already considered seemed to intimate, respecting the last perilous times.

Worthy of notice is the language of a periodical writer, quoted by Mr. Cuninghame, on the French revolution, made, however, without any reference to prophecy:—"We live at the commencement of an era more distinctly marked, by the great and immediate revolutions with which it has been ushered in, than any other in the annals of the world. No precise line of demarcation can be traced through the twilight boundaries of ancient and modern history; but the outline which separates this new era from that which has ended within our own remembrance, is strongly and conspicuously drawn for future ages. The French revolution has, as it were, been the breaking up of the abyss; and from our ark of liberty, which rides securely upon the waters, we behold every thing around us laid waste by the deluge." May what this author calls "the ark of liberty" be found to be the ark in which the small remnant of the faithful are concealed, who have escaped from the corruptions of apostate Christendom, for so only can our country hope to pass in safety the waves of these troubles that are to

overwhelm the fourth empire in utter destruction, and so only can we hope for the nation, that, as a nation, it will be preserved to see the happier times of the world to come, after this deluge has subsided.

So far I feel considerable confidence in the interpretation of the prophecy before us,—I think there are strong reasons for supposing the breaking out of the French revolution has marked the pouring forth of the first vial of the seventh trumpet. We are, then, if this be true, arrived at the commencement of the greatest of all prophetic eras—the several judgments of which must go forth till the fourth and last empire be destroyed, and the kingdom of Messiah appear.

SECTION XXIII.

The Second Vial.

IN proceeding with the remainder of the prophecy, I would express more doubt and hesitation in determining whether we are to consider all the calamities which have, in our age, befallen Europe, as being immediately connected with the revolutionary mania, and so to belong all to the first vial; or whether we may not trace, in recent events, as many as *four* more vials of the wrath of God, already poured upon the devoted nations.

Whichever way our judgments may determine, our expectations must be big with the awful prospects of futurity. In the first case, if we determine that all the troubles Europe has yet experienced belong to the first vial, the second, which calls our attention to the sea, must certainly be expected with some degree of trembling;

lest the maritime situation of our country should be pointed out as the scene of the next judgment. But, on the whole, I feel a confidence in the interpretation given above of the earthquake of the sixth seal, chap. xi. 13, and that Great Britain did then cease to belong to the mystic Babylon, or the Roman beast, and, therefore, will not be partaker in her plagues. I must own, however, that the recent attempt to destroy the national testimony against the damnable doctrines of the papacy, and to intrust Roman Catholics with the exercise of political power, without presuming to judge respecting the political expediency of the measure, is very ominous at the present crisis: since it should seem, from prophecy, that our preservation as a nation, in the last troubles, depends on this,—that we have been separated from, and no longer belong to, the Roman Catholic world:—

3. “And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.”

We can only illustrate the language of this prophecy by comparing it to the somewhat similar language of the second trumpet.* There the symbol exhibited was “a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea becomes blood.” This, as we learned from the events of history, was the great devastations of Genseric and his Vandals. The maritime provinces of the empire were the objects of this judgment. This judgment began in the peninsula, entirely destroyed the African province along the southern shores of the

* Chap. viii. 3.

Mediterranean, and grievously afflicted the islands and the Italian coast.

Africa is no longer Roman; and Britain, we hope, is no longer a part of the mystic city. The peninsula, therefore, and the Italian states, seem to be pointed out as the victim of this greater judgment. The question is,—is this judgment yet to come; or, have we seen its completion in what has happened to Italy, and especially to peninsular Spain? Is the symbol of the sea becoming the blood of a dead man to be deciphered of that most extraordinary state of torpor and stagnation of all its powers, in which that government gave itself up to the French ruler?—an event which is calculated to have cost the nation two millions of her inhabitants! “And his arm is stretched out still.”

SECTION XXIV.

The Third Vial.

10. “And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another angel out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”

HERE again we may illustrate by a prophecy certainly already fulfilled. The scene of this judgment is the same as in the third trumpet. There “a star like a burning lamp falls upon the third part of the rivers and upon the

fountains of waters," and the "waters become bitter, so that men who drink of them die." This was fulfilled by Attila and his Huns possessing themselves of the long boundary of the Danube and its tributary streams, and thus hastening the destruction of the empire.

With this explanation of the symbolical language of the prophecy now before us, we naturally direct our eyes to that powerful Roman Catholic monarchy now situated on the sources of the Danube. And that Austria is the destined victim, seems corroborated from the exclamation of the two angels, who mark, in this judgment, the just retaliation of divine vengeance on those who shed the blood of saints and prophets. For the Austrian dynasty are the legitimate successors of Charles V. and of Philip II., with a long list of persecuting princes.

The only question, then, seems to be, Do we see this judgment in the bloody and ineffectual struggles of Austria against the French armies in the late wars; or is the prophecy yet to be fulfilled?

SECTION XXV.

The Fourth Vial.

8. "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which had power over these plagues, and they repented not, to give him glory."

WE have nothing, in former prophecies, exactly similar to this symbol; and yet, from analogy, the interpretation seems to be easy. The sun, in prophetic language, is

the imperial authority. In a former vision, its becoming sackcloth, and its partially shining not, denoted the abolition or removal of the ruling powers. It is natural, therefore, to interpret this *increase* of power which is given to the solar beams as prognosticating the enlargement of the imperial authority, so that it should become the bane of nations under its influence.

If this be a judgment still in futurity, we can, of course, give no account of the particular circumstances under which it will take place. But considerable suspicions may arise, that the world has already seen the fulfilment of the judgment of this vial also.

When the French ruler had broken the power of Austria, and compelled its monarch to resign the honours of the imperial crown, he became, unquestionably, the symbolical sun of the Roman world; and, to refer to the symbols of a former prophecy, the fourth empire, under his dominion and influence, had more of the “strength of iron” in it than had usually been witnessed in its divided state. This increased power we saw exerted to the establishment of a most rigorous and efficient military tyranny over the greater part of the papal earth. It was, indeed, an extension of supreme power as extensively and as severely felt, and attended with as ruinous consequences to mankind, as any, perhaps, that can be instanced in the history of the nominally Christian world. It was but too plain, likewise, as the prophecy intimates, that the powerful rule of Buonaparte, and the calamities of war which it spread so far and wide, produced no religious or moral reformation.

SECTION XXVI.

The Fifth Vial.

10. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

IF the extension of the imperial or sovereign authority under Buonaparte, and the injuries of its sudden blaze, on all the nations of the European continent, be, indeed, the fulfilment of the former vial, we shall see cause to suspect that this vial has likewise had its fulfilment, in the strange reverse that has happened to this burning sun of the Roman world.

The judgment may seem, indeed, to have been poured on his very seat, the capital of his empire; and instead of a sun shining with increased heat, total darkness has succeeded. Indeed, it were difficult to tell, at this present moment, who is to be considered as the nominal head of the Roman empire among the sovereigns of Europe. It seems strictly analogous to the general style of these symbolical prophecies, to say the imperial sun shines not—his kingdom is full of darkness. And it will be thought by many, that nothing can more aptly describe the mortified pride and distressing humiliation of the disappointed tyrant and his satellites, and especially the ill-brooked restraints to which, in the absence of their military head, his former soldiers and partizans are compelled to submit, than the language of the prediction, "they gnawed their

tongues for pain." Nor will the application of the prophecy be rebutted, it is to be feared, by their religious or moral improvement in adversity.

But whether the four last vials can or cannot be shown to have been fulfilled in the recent history of Europe, to the entire satisfaction of the reader of prophecy; all will agree that the events symbolized by the next vial are still future; and the eyes of all will be intent upon the quarter of the globe clearly pointed out in the prophecy, to mark if any such events occur as its symbols seem to signify, and which—occurring as we suspect—would at once verify and confirm our dubious course through the last four vials.

SECTION XXVII.

The Sixth Vial.

12. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

AN unaccomplished prophecy we cannot attempt to explain, except in its general outline, from a reference to some supposed analogy to other prophecies which have been fulfilled. We shall, of course, as most expositors have done, compare the language of this prediction with that of the sixth trumpet, where the river Euphrates is also mentioned. By the symbol of loosing four angels bound in, or "upon the border of," this river, the rise of the Ottoman Turks was there foretold. It seems not improbable that the decay and exhausture of the same empire is prognosticated by the symbol of the drying up

of that river: and, it may be, the decay and exhaustion of the other great branch of the Mahometan power, the kingdom of Persia, which is also situated on the course of the Euphrates, and is somewhat more connected with that river.

The effect of the accomplishment of this prophecy will be, that “the way of the kings of the east may be prepared.” Who these “kings of the east,” or “of the sun-rising,” are, perhaps appears not as yet. We can only quote the language of other prophecies that seem to forebode the same event:—

Ah, country, continually extending the shadow of its wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Cush;

That sendeth ambassadors by sea,
Even in light vessels on the face of the waters.

Go—ye swift messengers!

To a nation scattered and cast away,
To a nation feared from that day and henceforward;

To a nation, expecting and expecting, and still trampled
under foot,

Whose land the rivers have spoiled, &c. *

Who hath raised up the Just One from the east,
Hath called him to his feet!

Hath given up nations before him,
Hath subdued kings!

Hath rendered his sword as a column of dust,
And as the driven stubble his bow?

He pursued them, he went on prosperously,
He touched not the road with his feet. †

* Isaiah, xviii.

† Chap. xli. 2.

I have raised him up from the north, and he shall come,
From the rising of the sun shall he invoke my name :

And he shall trample princes like mortar,
And as the potter treadeth the clay. *

From beyond the rivers of Cush,
My suppliants shall bring as an offering the daughter of my
dispersed. †

Compare, also, the description of the parties, in the vision of Ezekiel, who question the deed of the last adversary : “ Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof,” &c. ‡

And what is said respecting the fears of the last adversary in Daniel, || — “ But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him,” &c.

Upon the whole, then, it appears that some active instruments of Divine Providence will be raised up in this direction, who, probably, will be employed in the restoration of his ancient people Israel. Mr. Mede and Mr. Faber are of opinion, and Mr. Cuninghame rather coincides with them, that the restored children of Israel are intended by the kings of the east. Mr. Granville Sharp thought that the risen saints of the first resurrection are designated by this appellation.

But we are to remark,—whether by “ kings of the east” be meant some subordinate instruments, or the Lord from heaven, with his holy myriads, immediately,—that the symbol of this vial only says their way is *prepared* by the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates. And this vial may truly be called THE VIAL OF THE PREPARATION. Not only is the way of the kings of the

* Chap. xli. 25.

† Zeph. iii. 10.

‡ Chap. xxxviii. 13.

|| Chap. xi. 44.

east *prepared*, but the remainder of its symbols shows the great fourth empire *preparing* also for the grand conflict, which is to end in its own destruction, and to *prepare* the way for the establishment of Messiah's promised kingdom.

13. " And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of Almighty God."

We understand the *crisis* that is approaching—we understand the *parties* from whence these new symbols originate; but as to the symbols themselves, all conjecture must be at a stand.

The battle of that " great day of Almighty God" has been, first and last, the grand theme of prophecy: the conflict thereby intended we cannot mistake. The *dragon*, as we have learned, symbolizes the immediate influence of Satan upon the people of the fourth or Roman empire. The *beast*, as distinguished from the dragon, was the revived Roman empire, formed of the distinct sovereignties of modern Europe. The *false prophet* cannot be applied to any other power than to the second lamb-like beast, who exercised the power of the first beast before him, and erected an image of him: that is to say, the Roman ecclesiastical state, or the apostate Christian priesthood, spread throughout the whole empire of the beast, but erecting the grand idol of their worship and the bond of their unity and power in " the great city that ruleth over the kings of the earth."

So far, therefore, is plain,—that from these three known agents who have so long been manifested to the world, and from some future combination of their powers

will spring the instruments of those last delusions, which will deceive the nations to their final destruction. No very noble emblem, in truth, symbolizes these accursed agents,—“three unclean spirits like frogs,”¹—“spirits of demons.” But what will most strike our attention is, that they are represented as “working miracles.” We understand, because history has explained to us, how the Roman Catholic clergy, represented by the lamb-like beast, “deceived them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.”* The same “working of Satan,” then, it seems, “with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish,”† is to continue to the time of the end, and is still to be the great principle of action and of deception in the fourth or Roman empire.

It is difficult, therefore, to say what these “frogs” can symbolize, coming out, as they do, from the mouths of the *dragon*, the *beast*, and the *false prophet*, but a revival of the worst delusions of the Roman Catholic superstition, or something worse than these, springing from the same sources. We had thought, perhaps, that the world had now become too wise and enlightened to become the dupes of such lying wonders as had deceived our rude forefathers; but it should seem we are mistaken. Modern philosophy, perhaps, will have done but little. Its atheistical and free-thinking principles, it may be, will have been found not practicable. The favourite

¹ “Frogs, in ancient authors, as Pliny, Philo, and many others, are symbols of impurity, vain glory, imposture, flattery, and impudence, observe.”—PYLE.

* Chap. xiii. 14.

† 2 Thess. ii. 9.

instrument of Satan will still be "miracles" and "lying wonders;" and the authorities, both political and ecclesiastical, of the Roman Catholic world, will unite their efforts with the prince of darkness, to set forward this last delusion which deceives the nations.

The success of this delusion is great indeed. By means of these symbolical frogs, "the kings of the earth and of the whole world are gathered together,"—to oppose that cause which, in the event, proves that very cause of God in which his own avenging right hand will be stretched out. The "earth and the whole world" is understood to mean, not only the kings of the Roman empire, but, in a manner, of all surrounding nations. And it has already appeared, that not only the nations of the Latin empire are drawn together on this great occasion, but many more besides. In Ezekiel was specified, besides the western colonies of Magog, Gomer, &c., all the nations of the north, and of what now forms the Turkish and Persian dominions. And, finally, he has power over Egypt, and the African nations are at his steps; so that it is plain but little is left of all the nations that ever formed the bodies of the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, or the Roman empires.

As we have seen in former prophecies,* however, "tidings out of the north and out of the east alarm him," and "Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish with the young lions thereof," question the success of his mighty enterprise; and we know the issue. "He comes to his end, and none doth help him."

We are strongly reminded, by the text, that these preparations lead to the grand final catastrophe,—the

* Daniel; Ezekiel.

principal theme of prophecy since the world began; and we are reminded, also, of the prognosticated sudden and unexpected coming of Christ:—

13. “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

This is certainly a note of admonition to the people of God. By their garments, it seems safe to conclude, is meant the same as “the fine linen” which clothed the saints in a former part of the vision,—“the robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.” It is the symbol of a Saviour’s imputed righteousness. The meaning of the admonition will be, Blessed are those of my professed servants, who, in the times of these strong delusions, “when false Christs and false prophets shall arise and deceive many, and shall show great wonders, so that they shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect,”—blessed are they who, in these times of error, hold fast and “keep whole and undefiled” this grand essential truth, for otherwise his nakedness will be seen: no doctrine of human merit, no modification of the self-righteous principle, nothing short of a simple and entire trust in a Saviour’s merits, can supply a covering for us in that day, when “judgment shall be brought forth unto victory!”

After the introduction of this admonition, the effect of the delusion under which the nations are acting, is foretold:—

16. “And he gathered them together into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.”

We were told, in a former part of the vision, that the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God would be trodden without the mystical city. The space of sixteen

hundred stadia was marked out, which proves to be the extent of the shores of the Holy Land. It was also the uniform language of every prophet that prophesied of the fall of the last mortal foe, or more especially of its armies, that the scene of this great destruction will be the hills and valleys of this highly destined country.

Armageddon is most commonly understood to signify the "mountain,"—or rather, "the devoted destruction, of Megiddo." Megiddo is the name of a town in Palestine, celebrated, on several occasions, in the history of Israel,* and marking a district which we before conceived, from the intimation of former prophecies, to be pointed out as the scene of this last conflict of the apostate nations.

The account of a late traveller respecting this district of the Holy Land, and his observations, are, in the view of our subject, highly interesting and important. Megiddo, it should seem from this author, marks out the great military post of this part of the world, on which all invading armies would of course, from the nature of the country, consolidate their power. "This plain," "called, by way of eminence, the great plain, in Scripture, and elsewhere the great plain or field of Esdraelon," "the field of Megiddo, the Galilean plain,"—"we found one vast meadow, covered with the richest pasture." "It has been a chosen place for encampment in every contest carried on in this country, from the days of Nabuchodonosor, king of Assyria, unto the disastrous march of Napoleon Buonaparte from Egypt into Syria. Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian Crusaders, and antichristian Frenchmen, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs, warriors of every nation that is under heaven,

* Judges, v. 19; 2 Kings, xiii. 29, 30.

have pitched their tents on the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the banners of their nations wet with the dew of Tabor and Hermon.”¹

SECTION XXVIII.

The Seventh Vial.

17. “And the seventh angel poured out his vial upon the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found; and there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

The great voice from the throne, proclaiming “It is done,” clearly intimates that this seventh vial contains the consummation of that destined judgment of the enemies of God — of that judgment which has been the perpetual theme and anticipation of prophecy. It is the era, therefore, of the casting of the stone against the image — of the destruction of the fourth beast of Daniel — the time when Michael shall stand up. For then, as it was told to the prophet, — “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even

¹ CLARKE'S Travels.

to that same time." As our Lord himself has expressed it,—“ In those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved ; but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.”—“ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth ; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken,” &c.

How this mighty revolution is to be accomplished,—what is meant by the great city dividing, in the midst of the earthquake, into three parts,—the falling of the cities of the nations,—and Babylon’s drinking of the cup of the fierceness of wrath,—and how these things are connected with the battle of Armageddon, the awful event can, perhaps, alone explain particularly. One thing we perceive under the veil of prophecy : these judgments produce no moral reformation ; the sufferers continue blasphemers of God : the work of destruction must, therefore, be entire.

But more is told us respecting this day of wonders, to which it is our duty and privilege to give most diligent heed.

SECTION XXIX.

The Judgment of the great Whore and of the mystic Babylon announced, Chapters xvii. and xviii.

Chap. xvii. “ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come

hither, and I will show unto you the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornications."

THE known symbol of an adulteress, or harlot, for an apostate church, will sufficiently prepare us for what we are to expect:—

3. "So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

However plain the fulfilment has made this prediction to the present readers of prophecy, we may well conceive that to St. John it would appear most perplexing. But on this occasion, as was usually vouchsafed to Daniel, an angel is sent to explain the symbol:—

7. "And the angel said to me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, with seven heads and ten horns. The beast which thou sawest was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition."

That is to say, it is the same beast that the apostle had before seen, rising out of the sea, as described in the thirteenth chapter—as we have seen—the revived Roman empire. The beast *was not* when one of his heads was

wounded to death, and *was* again, when that deadly wound, as there represented, was healed.

All the world, except the elect of God, it was there declared, would worship this revived empire. So it is repeated by the angel in the passage before us : —

“ And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, that he was, and is not, and yet is.”¹

The very elect are not deceived. It is not possible. But how awful the reflection, that all who are deceived by that religion which the revived Roman empire supports and upholds, are rejected of God, and are not numbered with his people ! The angel proceeds : —

9. “ And here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.”

This is one circumstance pointed out to the reflecting mind, as denoted by the seven heads ; and the known situation of imperial Rome, on its seven celebrated hills, is too plain to be mistaken : we cannot now doubt where we are to look for the dwelling of the “ great whore.” Wonderful, indeed, must it have appeared in the age of St. John, that the apostate church should one day possess, in sovereign state, the capital of the Roman empire, and should, from the seven hills, deal out her spiritual corruptions, to intoxicate and subdue the same world that the legions of the imperial city had conquered with the sword. But now we must shut our eyes, indeed, if we refuse to recognise, in this emblem of the woman

¹ For *καίπερ ἐστίν*, Griesbach has *καὶ παρῶνται*.

sitting on the scarlet beast, the vaunted apostolical see of Rome—"Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots,"—as the churches in the Roman Catholic communion remarkably express themselves, when they speak of the Romish church—"ROME, MOTHER AND MISTRESS."

But these heads of the beast are intended to be an emblem of something further in the structure of the Roman empire:—

10. "And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

Kings, as we have seen, denote, in prophetic language, forms of government. The Roman empire was to have seven during the long period of its reign upon earth. "Five were" already "fallen" at the era in which St. John wrote the Apocalypse. History has explained these to have been—kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and consular tribunes; one, the sixth head, was at that time in existence, namely, the imperial. The other was not yet come; when he came, he was to continue for a short time:—

11. "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

Expositors have differed in their explanation of this part of the symbol. But so far seems plain; that the revived Roman empire is identified all along, or very nearly so,—from the time of its revival till it goes into perdition—with the eighth head; and that this eighth head is not properly a new head, but "of the seven."

This has been explained: the titular imperial head of the

divided empire, who has existed all the time of the Roman Catholic dynasties, though he possesses not the power and authority of Augustus and the Cæsars, yet is deemed and called their successor: so that he is an emperor as well as they. Thus may *he* be said to be “ of the seven.”

What is to be counted as the seventh, on this hypothesis, has created some difficulty: but it has been observed, that Charlemagne, and some of his predecessors, held the sovereign civil authority of Rome, under the title of *patrician*, before he received that of emperor. This head was to last but a little while. The space of the patrician government was comparatively very short, in respect of the imperial sway: and yet this form of government of the Roman city might be important enough to be numbered, with decemvirs and consular tribunes, among the heads of the beast; and, under Charles at least, — and virtually under the earlier Gothic conquerors of Italy, — it was certainly an independent sovereign power. As Mr. Gibbon observes: “ Except an original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining which the title of emperor could add to the patrician of Rome.”¹

Such was nearly Mr. Faber’s original explanation of these symbols; but he has, in his latest publication, adopted a new hypothesis. He makes the revival of the western empire, by Charlemagne, to be the healing of the deadly wound, and the restoring of the sixth head of the beast; which headship, he says, continued till the forced renunciation of the imperial titles by the present Austrian monarch, when a new headship — the seventh — was seen

¹ This “ original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty,” it may, however, be objected, was all this time in the Greek empe-

rors, and, in a manner, acknowledged till the coronation of Charles. See Gibbon.

in the dominion of Napoleon Buonaparte. This, according to the prophecy, was to "last but a little while,"—it has already fallen; and "the eighth, which is of the seven," is immediately to be looked for.

But I understand the prophecy to call that "the eighth" government, which is identified all along, or nearly so, with the revived Roman empire, from the time of its arising out of the abyss, or sea, till the day it goes into perdition. In the thirteenth chapter, the symbol of this same power arises out of the sea, "having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns." Here are *eight* forms of government plainly depicted—*seven* symbolized by *heads*—the *eighth* by ten crowned horns. How "the eighth is of the seven" seems explained by Daniel, vii. 20: "The ten horns that were in his *head*." The seventh head was to last for a little while,—its sovereignty was to be divided, and transferred to ten horns that grow out of it. This division had taken place, or was very soon to be the distinguishing symbol, when the vision shows to St. John "the beast rising out of the sea,"—"the crowns are on the horns."*

Now, it was in this state—not as symbolized by the heads and horns of the red dragon, but as symbolized by the leopard-like beast of the sea, with its crowned horns—that the apostate has power to continue forty and two months.† And that this is the same power which is symbolized by "the scarlet-coloured beast," in the part of the vision now before us, which is said to "arise out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition," is evident from this, that both beasts carry and support the papacy. For the papacy was, as we clearly discovered, symbolized by a little horn growing

* Chap. xiii.

† Ver. 5.

up among the ten, on the fourth beast of Daniel, and it is here symbolized by an adulteress sitting on the same beast.

These considerations appear to me to be conclusive against Mr. Faber's new explanation. Agreeably with what I have observed before,* I would decipher the symbols as follows:—The sixth head is the imperial government of Rome, which began with Augustus Cæsar, B. C. 31; and—though wounded, *as it were*, to death by the sword of the Goths, when Momyllus Augustulus was deposed, A. D. 476—did not actually become extinct till the revolt of the pope and Italians, A. D. 728, or, perhaps, not till the coronation of Charlemagne, A. D. 800.

The feudal sovereignty of the northern invaders of the Roman empire, consolidated at length under Charlemagne—often called by historians the restorer of the western empire—was the seventh head, which, in St. John's time, who lived under the Roman Cæsars, “was not yet come.”

“And when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” The empire of Charlemagne, though it combined together almost all the northern barbarian nations which had parcelled out the western empire between them, and extended nearly to the limits of Roman civilization in Europe, as an united empire, hardly lasted beyond his own life. Under his descendants, the “kingdom was divided,” and the present independent sovereignties of modern Europe arose. These kingdoms form the beast in his last state; and, counting Charlemagne's imperial rule—not excluding, perhaps, the virtual sovereignty of his predecessors—as the seventh form of government exercised over Rome and its provinces, they are an *eighth* form of government: but their government is of the seven. The sovereignty

* On chapter xiii.

established by the northern barbarians over Rome and the empire, though for a short time consolidated under Charlemagne, becomes divided among the various barbarian princes that succeed to the different parts of his dominion, who acknowledge only a nominal power in his successors. Thus are they, though an eighth form of government, yet not a new head, but of the seven — symbolized by crowned horns growing out of the seventh head :—

12. “ And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour,” — or, “ the same hour ”¹ — “ with the beast.”

This state of the Roman empire, whatever it be that mysteriously conceals the precise date of its beginning,* was clearly predicted, both in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and in Daniel’s vision of the four beasts. Ten kings, possessing independent authority, were to arise out of the Roman empire in its last state, without, however, the empire’s being absolutely destroyed. And such has proved to be the situation of the different potentates of Roman Catholic Europe. They are called *ten*, because, as we have seen, such was their original number, at the beginning of the era of their joint reign with the beast :—

13. “ These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

Though possessed of independent sovereign authority within their respective kingdoms, yet they shall agree to

¹ “ What we translate ‘ one point of time,’ as several learned hour’ should rather have been interpreted have observed.” — rendered ‘ at the same hour or.’ LOWMAN.

* See on chap. xiii., where the question as to the *commencement* of the barbarian headship of the Roman beast is more particularly considered.

support that persecuting tyranny which constitutes the character of the fourth empire, as seen in opposition to Christ and his people; and, accordingly, persecution has raged, more or less, in all the independent sovereignties of Europe, to support the Roman Catholic polity and religion.

These same potentates, as is shown in the sixth vial, are gathered together, by the arts of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, to the great day of the battle of Almighty God. So the angel tells us here respecting them:—

14. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

As was explained to Daniel, “In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.” “The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.” These are the called, and chosen, and faithful, that are with the Lamb: but of these we shall see more hereafter. The angel proceeds with his explanation:—

15. “And he said unto me, The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put it in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

The fate, therefore, of the Roman see, as distinct from the empire, appears to be clearly revealed. It

becomes at length, but not till the era of the very last dreadful troubles, an object of hatred to the kings, her former votaries. They spoil her of all her possessions; they devour her very substance, and burn her with fire. How the mystical whore, as an emblem of an apostate church, can be burnt with fire, we seem to gather from the last verse, in which the angel identifies the woman with the city of Rome. The burning of the city of Rome and destroying of the papal see will therefore be one of the events of the last dreadful vial.

But we are to bear in mind, the beast still survives, and the false prophet with him; they fall together—not by the sword of man—in the field of Armageddon. This seems to confirm the interpretation of these symbols as given above, that the first beast is the revived empire generally; the second beast—the same as the false prophet—the ecclesiastical state universally: and that the image which the second beast made of the first beast, was the dominion of the papacy—the little horn of the fourth beast. The image, it appears, is destroyed, in the last dreadful tumults, by them who once adored it. The apostate priesthood are still as a false prophet with the beast, and are promoters of the last confederacy against the Lamb. The destruction of the great whore, however, does not seem to take place till the very last; perhaps we may say not till *all* causes are actually in operation, which deceive the nations to their destruction.

Chap. xviii. 1. “And after these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

The fall of the mystic Babylon is now become the triumphant theme with which the heavens echo, and which they bear as "tidings of great joy to the earth below." This great angel, with whose glory the earth is enlightened, seems to be the great archangel himself; and it is by the "breath of HIS mouth" that "that wicked" is "consumed." He is "destroyed with the brightness of HIS coming."*

The figurative language of the second verse is intended, I conceive, to depicture a scene of the greatest desolation. Babylon is become a dreary waste, such as unhappy spirits choose as their abode, who are permitted to wander on this earth,—a desert place far from the habitations of man, among those birds and doleful creatures that most shun the human sight.†

3. "For all nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

The fall of Babylon, predicted in this chapter, seems evidently no local calamity, which, in its ravages, is confined to the city of Rome and its neighbourhood. That that city, amidst the troubles of the last days, will be burnt by the kings, her former votaries, and the papal see destroyed, is a fact clearly stated in prophecy. But this seems merely the fruits of a civil commotion among the enemies of the Lamb: no change for the better takes place, which can divert the fiery indignation of the Lord from them all. "*All nations* are to drink of the wine of the *wrath* of her fornication,"—all who "were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."‡

* 2 Thess. ii.

† Compare Isaiah, xxxiv.

‡ Chap. xvii. 2.

All the kings who were beguiled with her spiritual whoredoms, and the merchants enriched by the trade of a luxurious world—a world become “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God”—are to be partakers of her plagues.

In this awful season, when the seventh vial is poured out, for it is at this season that great Babylon comes in remembrance before God, not only does he give to her of “the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath;” but “the cities of the nations fall;” “and every island flees away, and the mountains are not found:” “there are voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there is a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.” The whole Roman world—in other words, the great city which, during these political convulsions, is divided into three parts—all this great mystical city, we may well conclude therefore, will be involved in these last troubles.

4. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

This warning is much to be marked. From what follows, I understand “the voice” as a symbol of the gathering of the elect out of the devoted countries, by the call of Him who quickens the dead and changes the living saints—who will cause this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality. I conclude this, because these servants of Christ that come out of the mystic Babylon, are called immediately to assist in the work of righteous vengeance:—

6. “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double to

her double according to her works : in the cup that she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her : for she saith in her heart, I sit as queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow ; therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire : for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her."

The persons here addressed, who before had been called to come out of the mystic Babylon, are clearly among those who are to be the coadjutors of Christ in the judgment. They are " the holy myriads, then, that come with the Lord," as we have seen in all former prophecies ; the " called, and chosen, and faithful," described as being with the Lamb, in the fourteenth verse of the last chapter, and of whom we shall learn more hereafter.

It cannot, moreover, escape our attention, in the passage before us, that great confidence and fancied security, and a most luxurious style of living, is ascribed to the mystic Babylon, at the very time that this sudden destruction overtakes her. And the Scripture prophecies ever give the same description of the ungodly world, overtaken by the coming of the great Avenger. The suddenness of the catastrophe, in the days of Noah, and of Lot, we shall remember, is referred to by our Lord, as illustrative of the day of his coming. We shall remember, too, the standing metaphor of the " thief in the night,"—of " the snare,"—of the " pangs that come upon a woman with child,"—so often used to describe the manner in which the ungodly world is taken by surprise on this occasion. It is true that other Scriptures describe the time when the Son of Man shall be revealed as a time of unexampled trouble, of wars and tumults. But, perhaps, it is not until late in that season that Babylon

becomes the victim. It may be, the fourth empire, recovering its strength, is, for a long time, the successful aggressor upon the peace of others; and driving war far from its own territories, has accumulated there, by the desolation of other countries, the spoils that enrich itself, and afford every means of extravagant and luxurious living. And, certainly, it is the general voice of prophecy, that the prosperity of the great antichristian adversary is very great at the eve of his destruction, when his armies overflow and perish in Palestine. Ezekiel's prophecy describes the judgment that falls upon the devoted nations, as overtaking them "that dwell *carelessly in the isles.*"

Let it be deemed worthy of notice, therefore, whoever may live to see it, that if, when these unsettled times be over, a season of peace and prosperity follow, or of successful warfare in the Roman Catholic world, and while the same idolatrous worship is kept up, practical atheism, irreligion, profligate debauchery, and luxurious self-indulgence, prevail more and more;—let it be noted, whoever may live to see it, as a sign of the times, that the "coming of the Lord is near at hand, even at the door."

9. "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come!"

A mystery, perhaps not at present to be unfolded, meets us here. The kings of the earth, in this passage, bewail the fiery judgment that befalls the mystic city! But, in the former chapter, they are described as "hating

the great whore, making her desolate and naked, eating her flesh, and burning her with fire!" This confirms me in the opinion, that we are to distinguish, in these predicted judgments, between the destruction of "the woman" and the destruction of "the great mystic city,"—which is, indeed, like herself, spiritually called Babylon, and called also "Egypt," and "Sodom," and "Jerusalem,"—that the spoiling, and eating, and burning of the woman, by the kings, the horns of the beast, symbolizes the confiscation and secularization of the possessions of the papal see, and thus, in effect, the destruction of the ruling church, the image of the beast, which the Roman world had so long submitted to carry, as a beast of burden. But I conceive the extended territories of the still Roman Catholic, or atheistical Roman Catholic beast, are the mystic city in its extensive sense, and that this is the city that the kings here bewail; a city, not destroyed by human hands, but, as every prophecy has declared, by fire from heaven.

But, it will be said, the kings of the Roman earth behold this destruction afar off. How, then, can it be the territories of the beast, of which their kingdoms form so many parts, that is now the victim of divine vengeance?

The clear solution which the prophecy affords of this difficulty, strongly confirms me in the belief of the interpretation here offered. The destruction of this mystic city is an event which happens in the seventh vial. Now, that seventh vial finds the Roman world emptied, at the moment, of its great potentates. For it was the last business of the *sixth* vial "to gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world,"—"to gather them together into a place called, in Hebrew, Armageddon." This, the mystic "frogs" from the mouth of the dragon, of the beast, and of

the false prophet, had accomplished by their lying wonders. And the seventh vial actually finds them encamped at Megiddo, on the shores of Palestine: that it might be fulfilled that is written in many of the prophets — on the holy mountains must the mystic Assyrian and Babylonian perish. Gog meets not his fate in the fire that consumes the land of Magog; but “he and his multitude” fall in the land of Israel,—and there, as was distinctly marked in a former vision — “*without the city*” — the “great wine-press of the wrath of God is trodden.” Thus, then, is explained how the kings of the earth, which had been partakers of the corruptions of the mystic Babylon, bewail her destruction at a distance.

The merchants of the earth also bewail her fall: —

11. “And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth of their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood,¹ and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and all brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours,² and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men,” — or perhaps, “and of bodies, even the persons of men.” — “And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.”

“The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torments, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For, in one hour, so great riches are come to nought. And every ship-master, and

¹ A kind of wood valuable for its sweet scent.

² Or, “sweet-smelling incense.”

all the company in ships,¹ and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness; for in one hour is she made desolate!”

This is, indeed, a striking picture of a great and luxurious city, which, having been the mart of the nations, suddenly perishes. The merchants, and traders, and owners of vessels, intent, it is to be feared, upon their gains, and too indifferent about the cause of religion and the coming of Christ's kingdom, are confounded and distressed beyond description. I cannot but think real merchants and traders are intended: the specification of the articles of their commerce is, indeed, so particular, that I conceive there is no room for a figurative exposition. It will occur, however, to every one, that no sudden loss of the trade of the city of Rome itself would create such confusion and ruin in the commercial world as is here described. Agreeably, therefore, with what has been before remarked, we must understand the symbol of the “mystic city” to be destroyed, of the whole dominion of the apostate kings; of that fourth beast of Daniel “whose dominion is not only to be taken away, but his body given to the burning flame.”

But, although the traders of the earth are lamenting because “the hopes of their gains” are gone; yet there are that view the judgment of the great Babylon in a very different light.

¹ Or, according to another reading, “And he that saileth to the place, and sailors.” *

20. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you of her. And a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and of musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee, and no craftsman of whatever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee, and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee, and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived,"—or, "thy merchants, indeed, were the great men of the earth; by thy magic, truly, were all the nations deceived."—"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

The inhabitants of heaven, with the departed prophets and apostles, are called to look upon the great enemy of that cause in which they laboured and fell, now suffering the vengeance of God. How often was it promised in the ancient oracles, "Thine eye shall look in triumph upon thine enemies!"

The new symbol that is here given of the destruction of the apostate city, bespeaks it to be sudden, complete, and irretrievable. If the whole continent of Europe, with its luxurious cities, all the day long stunned with din of business and preparations for the enjoyments of a prosperous people, and whose illumined streets and palaces present the nightly festival of dissipation and extravagant mirth, of profligacy and debauchery,—if all this reigning region of the globe, in the midst of its careless, unsuspecting prosperity, should sink at once ingulfed in the devouring flames, we could not say the fulfilment had exceeded the prediction!

How awfully interesting, then, is the speculation: which are the nations that shall escape the fall of Babylon, to be the site of the glorious kingdom which the God of heaven will set up? For "the" same "stone," we remember, "that smites the image, becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth!"

We remark, further, that the blood of all the departed saints and martyrs is said to be demanded "of this generation." The same is the view which our Lord took of the desolation of Jerusalem. It is not easy, it seems, in the eyes of a righteous God, to cleanse a land from the blood of saints and martyrs that have been shed thereon.

By merchants here, some, indeed, understand the dealers in the spiritual traffic of the mystic Babylon; and this receives some countenance by its connexion with the sorceries that had deceived all nations. But from what has been before said, I lean to the literal interpretation; and conceive, that though the ancient superstitions of the great whore are by no means at an end, yet a more modern state of society in Europe has sat for this picture. I conceive, too, that the word we render "sorcery," or "magic," may equally well apply to the fascinations of luxury and extravagance, and to the various arts by which a pleasure-loving world is pampered, as to the deceptions and religious impostures that, in former times, bewitched the giddy multitude; and, in some way or other, do bewitch the inhabitants of the Roman world, or part of them, to the last.

The greatness of the merchants, I conceive, is, at least, to be taken literally. The costliness of Babylon had made rich "all that had ships in the sea;" and in the state of things often foreboded of the last days, trade

and commerce may very likely be the only or principal road to wealth and greatness. Let those, therefore, who may live to see, in Roman Catholic Europe, or corrupt Christendom in general, a season of triumph and prosperity, attended with its usual corruption of manners,—to see increased wealth squandered among the “inventors of evil things,” and among the pamperers of lust and extravagance,—to see the commercial interest rise paramount to all other considerations, trampling upon the rights of justice, despising the plea of mercy, and leading to a disregard of the ordinances of religion,—let them that behold, mark the signs of the times. Then will there be cause to think that the mystic Babylon—the golden city—though she sits as queen, and fears no evil—is ripe for destruction.

It is very clear, indeed, that the Roman world never loses entirely the influence of its idolatrous superstition. The false prophet is an active agent in its last exertions of power. But some change seems to take place with respect to the apostate church itself: those that formerly adorned her with gold and precious stones, strip her, and make her naked, and eat her flesh. The “lovers of money” will, perhaps, require a cheaper religion, and begin to withdraw that support they once gave to antiquated institutions, and yet may become the victims of the same superstition as their forefathers were, or something like it. Thus, it should seem, the false prophet, in order to deceive the world in its last stage of its opposition to the truth, does not make an “image of the beast”—erect a magnificent church, formed, after the manner of the imperial government, to rule over the earth, and to receive the adoration of the admiring multitude. His last instrument of deceit is of a far more mean and

grovelling cast. For the symbols of prophecy are always truly characteristic of the thing predicted; and the symbol of this last wonder-working instrument is “a frog!”—“a frog” the dragon produces, and “a frog” is the production of the beast, and “a frog” of the false prophet. Some very contemptible contrivance deceives the gay, the enlightened, the philosophical world at last!! Nor is it unlikely that among the “scoffers” of “the last days,” superstition must work its way more secretly and covertly, and that the encouragement of trade and of the fine arts, the improvement of agriculture and mechanics, and—we are admonished by prophecy to add—the love of war, will be seen chiefly to occupy the public attention, and to supply matter for the grand concern and business of life. We read in an ancient oracle:—

Surely ‘it is’ the day of Jehovah Sabaoth!

Against every thing that is high, and it falleth;

Against every thing that is exalted, and it is made low!

Even against all the cedars of Lebanon,

And against all the oaks of Bashan:

And against all the high mountains,

And against all the lofty eminences:

And against every high raised tower,

And against every fortified wall:

And against all the ships of Tarshish,

And against all the pleasing works of art:

And it shall bow down the high things of men,

And the pride of mortals shall be laid low:

And Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day,

And the idols he will utterly destroy.

SECTION XXX.

The Approach of Messiah's Kingdom proclaimed.

Chap. xix. "And after these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia! And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

FROM these congratulatory songs of heaven, we collect that it is in the judgment of the great apostate church, or in scenes that quickly follow her judgment, whatever partial changes might have taken place among her votaries, that the fourth empire falls:—

4. "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts,"—or, "living creatures,"—"fell down, and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to

worship him: and he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."

These congratulations of heaven proclaim the promised kingdom of Messiah to be approaching nearer and nearer. At the fall of the mystic Babylon, we had long since learned, it was to be manifested. We shall recollect, too, in the symbol of the bride—a very ancient symbol of the happy state of the church at the second advent—when her great adversary has been destroyed, and she, with her royal husband, is manifested in glory.* But these congratulatory songs, after the wonted style of the Revelation, only prepare us for the introduction of the proper emblems that are to represent the business of the second advent. These immediately follow—corroborating all that the prophets have said since the world began, concerning the power and coming of the JUST ONE,—“who appeared once”—at his first advent—to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and to them that look for him, will appear a second time, without sin, unto salvation:—

11. “And I saw heaven opened, and, behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was faithful and true, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written which no man knew but he himself: and he was clothed in a vesture dipped with blood: and his name was called the WORD OF GOD.”

We cannot hesitate for a moment to pronounce of

* Psalm xlv.; Isaiah, lxii.; Hosea, ii. 19; Jeremiah, iii. 14.

whom this symbol is to be deciphered. It is the long-promised REDEEMER, FAITHFUL to his engagements, TRUE to his promise. He comes in glorious majesty and with regal dignity, as is denoted by "the white horse" and by "the many crowns." He is to judge the quick and dead in the character of the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. He is going forth to the battle of the great day of Almighty God,— "the day of vengeance is in his heart, the year of his redeemed is come,"— therefore are "his eyes like a flame of fire," and "his garments red like him that treadeth the wine-press."

14. "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

The consideration of many former Scriptures have led us to believe, that the holy ones, or saints, that come with Christ, when he cometh to judge the apostate world, and to destroy the last human adversary, are not angels only, but more especially the glorified men whom he hath redeemed from the earth: and what is here said of the armies of heaven that follow the WORD of GOD upon their white horses — that is to say, with regal character — proves this notion to be true. Their garments bespeak them partakers of the atonement in the blood of Christ: "The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints," — "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

15. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness

* Compare Psalm cxlix.; Isaiah, xiii. 3; Dan. vii. 22, &c.; Haggai, ii. 7; Zech. xiv. 5.

and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’

We know this symbol so well in the ancient prophets, that it would be superfluous to interpret: only we may remark, it is not with the sword, as of a common warrior, though that metaphor be frequently used to predict this vengeance, but with his all-powerful word — pronouncing sentence as a Judge — that he fights and contends with his adversaries. And so we shall recollect that many Scriptures, foretelling this last grand destruction of the enemy, ascribe it to the voice of Jehovah.*

SECTION XXXI.

The Battle of the great Day of Almighty God.

17. “ And I saw another angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both bond and free, both small and great.”

The angel standing in the sun, from a comparison of other visions, may denote that the head of the Roman state is the victim pointed out. And indeed it must be so, from all the former prophecies of “ this day of the great battle of Almighty God:” none other can be

* Compare Psalm xxix.; xlv. 6; lxviii. 33; Isaiah, xxxiii. 3; xlii. 13; lxiii. 1; Jer. xxv. 30; Joel, iii. 16.

intended. And the sixth vial had seen the fourth empire sending forth all its powers, and encamping its congregated nations on the long-predicted spot — the plains and mountains of the glorious Holy Land.

19. “ And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.”

That is, as the former “ prophets of Israel” have told us, they come to oppose and to spoil that people, to whose rescue and relief the King of saints and his armies come: —

20. “ And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: these both were cast alive into a lake of fire and brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

Such is the issue of the last final conflict, so often predicted.*

And on this occasion, we learned from ancient prophecy, that not only would the Avenger of Israel visit the kings of the earth upon the earth, but also “ the host of high ones on high.” So it was shown to St. John on this occasion: —

* Jude, ver. 14; Job, xix. 23, &c.; Deut. xxxii. 40, &c.; Numb. xxiv. 24; 1 Sam. ii. 10; Psalms iii. 7, 10; ix. 15; x. xlv. lvi. 9; lxviii. lxxvi. 5; lxxxix. xcvi. cx.; Isaiah, ii. 10; xiii. xxv. xxvii. 1; xxix. 5; xxx. 30; xxxiii. xxxiv. xlix. 24, &c.; lix. 17, &c.; lxii. 8, &c.; lxvi. Joel, iii. 1; Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix. Dan. ii. vii. Zech. xii. xiv. 3, &c.; Mal. iv.

Chap. xx. “ And I saw another angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and, after that, he must be loosed a little season.”

The language of this prediction is remarkably plain in itself, whatever mysteries it may seem to involve in its consequences. After the destruction of the fourth or Roman empire,—after the judgment of the apostate church and of all the human instruments of Satan’s delusions, this evil spirit himself shall be confined and restrained from all influence on mankind during a specified time. After this, for a short time, he is to be released again.

SECTION XXXII.

The Installation of the risen Saints with Christ, in his Kingdom upon Earth.

THIS same space of time during which Satan is bound, is that space which is, in a particular manner, assigned to the reign of Christ and his saints upon earth. His kingdom, indeed, and their kingdom, which they inherit with him, is often said to be without end—to be an everlasting kingdom. But this thousand years is the era of its commencement, and marks a period of its dominion in particular circumstances,—evidently over nations of living men in the flesh, nations who survive the destruction of the fourth empire, nations whom Satan, it should

seem, might deceive, as he had deceived others, but whom he is restrained from deceiving.

What will be the consequences of this, what will then be the physical and moral history of the human species, and what the operations of divine influence, and what the dispensation of the kingdom, is beyond all conjecture. It cannot, however, but excite the wonder and expectation of the inquiring mind; and still more and more, as we proceed with what follows:—

XX. 4. “ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received their mark in their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

In the interpretation of this, as of other parts of Scripture prophecies, we should carefully keep in view a canon of interpretation, so admirably illustrated by a late very learned prelate,¹ that no prophecy is of any private interpretation, that we must not attempt to make it its own expositor, taken apart and separate from the rest, but must consider it as part of a system, one of a series of predictions, and frame our interpretations accordingly. Now, the prediction, that the saints should be partakers with Christ in his kingdom, has formed a link in the chain of events foretold respecting the second advent, in

¹ HORSLEY.

almost every prophecy. We should not, therefore, expect to find the circumstance omitted in this last grand revelation of the last time.

We have seen, also, that this reigning of the saints is not referred to merely as to a state of future prosperity, which the church, in the latter days, was to expect; but as the comfort and encouragement of the servants of God in every age,—as something in which they themselves were personally interested, and as connected with their resurrection from the dead.

It was to be a kingdom that “flesh and blood could not inherit,” and, therefore, its possessors could not be mortal men in the flesh, but glorified spirits. Yet it was to be a kingdom that was upon earth. The heavenly beings who appeared in a very early scene of these visions, declared their expectation to be—that they should reign upon the earth.* It was a kingdom that was to succeed to the divided sovereignties of the fourth empire:—“In the days of those kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these.” And again, in Daniel’s vision, how clearly is it numbered as a fifth universal empire, to succeed the Roman as the Roman had succeeded the Grecian, the Grecian the Persian, the Persian the Babylonian. “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it for ever, even for ever and ever.” “And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall

* Chap. v. 10.

be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

We have just seen the symbols of the destruction of the fourth kingdom, which was to arise from the earth, in full agreement with ancient prophecies; so that we could not mistake it. A new event was, indeed, added, unknown before, or but obscurely intimated, that Satan should, at the same time, be restrained in his influence over mankind for a thousand years.

Next follows the symbolical representation before us, to the true application of which the whole tenour of prophecy is our guide. The symbol is that of thrones erected, and of persons sitting upon them. This needs no deciphering.

We are next informed who these persons are. They are, first, such as had suffered martyrdom in the cause of Christ,—“ And I saw the souls¹ of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God ;”—the same persons, evidently, who were shown to us in the vision of the fifth seal:—“ And I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word

¹ “ And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded,” &c., “ and they lived.” That this very plain assertion of a real resurrection of the dead should be made to afford an argument for a figurative revival of religion, because souls, and not bodies, are mentioned, has always struck me with surprise. To see a soul of the slain in the departed state, and to see it “ live” again, what else can it mean than a re-

storation of the vital spirit, to re-animate the body that had been dead. We know the force and meaning of the expressions, “ man became a *‘ living soul,’*”—“ Her soul was in departing, for she died,”—“ Let this child’s soul come into him again:” especially in the account of our Lord’s resurrection,—“ His soul was not left in hell.”

of God and the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth! And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should *rest* for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* This little season is now past. They *rest* in the departed state no longer: they are no longer numbered with them that sleep in the dust of the earth: they *live* and reign with Christ, and see — while they follow him, as shown in a vision before, upon their white horses — his judgment upon their once mighty adversaries.

But though the noble army of martyrs are first specified, these are not all for whom the thrones are set. John saw also “*the souls* which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their forehead or in their hands.” These, too, live and reign with Christ, and this clearly ascertains that *all* the faithful, *all* the elect people of God, do now live and reign with Christ. Because it is expressly said, chap. xiii. 8, where the same corruptions are symbolized by the same emblems: — “All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth.”

This is again repeated, chap. xvii. 8: — “And all they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

* Chap. vi. 9.

From hence it is manifest, that the trials and corruptions to which the professed church has been in every age exposed, have been sufficient to sweep before them all that were not chosen of God; but that none of these have been seduced either by the devil or the world. "The redeemed from among men,—the forty and four thousand,—the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, are not defiled with women;" that is to say, they were free from the corruptions of the times in which they lived,*—they had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.†

Now it is evident, as has been intimated before, if none but the elect escape, these mysterious terms must take in all manner of corruptions, essential ones at least, of these latter times, and not merely such as are commonly esteemed papistical and Roman Catholic. There are "divisions" also, and there are "heresies" also, among the Protestant and reformed churches, whereby "those that are approved are made manifest:" and with us, as with them that worship the image, it is "the foundation of God alone that standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth the mthat are his; and let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from evil."

According to our Lord's declaration, the very elect, in these latter times, would be deceived, if it were possible. If not by the great Antichrist—the consummation of the deceiver's artifice—by some of the "many" "false Christs" and "false prophets," all of whom, in the view of Scripture, belong to one great apostasy, and to the same rebellion against the light.

* Chap. xiv. 4.

† Chap. xv. 3.

This is strictly agreeable to the representation of St. Paul, where he shows, by the Spirit, "the working of Satan" in these latter ages. It is "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." And mark, in the following verse, how "the election" are contrasted with "them that perish,"—just as in these passages of the Revelation which we are now reading:—"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

We come, then, to this twofold conclusion,—that the delusions of Satan are every where so strong that all but the very elect will be deceived and perish;—that if those who obey not the truth worship not the beast or his image, they receive, in some way or other, his mark upon their foreheads or on their hand. There are but two parties in the professing world; those that receive their Father's seal and his name on their forehead, and those that receive the mark of the beast; as it is mysteriously represented:—if not on their forehead, yet in their hand. And we may safely distinguish these two parties, as the passage we just quoted has distinguished them:—the one "receive the love of the truth that they may be saved," and, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of that truth, they are saved,—the other "have not this love of truth;" they believe it not, but have pleasure in unrighteousness; they are given up to a strong delusion,

and believe a lie; and this lie, whatever it is, and this unrighteousness which is beloved, of whatever kind it may be, is a mark of the beast; and if you see it not on the forehead, declared with boldness and effrontery, you will discover it in *the dealings of the hand*. We may say, then, respecting the prize that awaits them that overcome all these delusions and corruptions,—the “election have obtained it, and the rest are blinded!”

And it is clear, from the passages we have compared together, that “*all the elect of God*,” or, which is the same thing, all that are saved through sanctification and belief of the truth, have part with the holy martyrs in the first resurrection,—are among those for whom these thrones are prepared. Indeed, the promise of the kingdom and of “the crown of righteousness” is every where in Scripture addressed generally to all the faithful: “Such honour have all his saints.” Let me quote especially Rev. ii. 26:—“He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” And chap. iii. 21:—“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.” Compare John, xvii. 22:—“And the glory that thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” Who these are that are distinguished, every where in this chapter of St. John, from the world, we cannot be at a loss to discover. The second, the ninth, the four-

teenth, and the twentieth verses, render this plain. But it is acknowledged that, as yet, the world knows not the children of God, "because they knew not Him." It is declared, however, that the whole creation waiteth for THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD.* And this is "the glory that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Christ."

We are here, then, reading of the common hope and expectation of all the faithful people of God. They all live and reign with Christ a thousand years. It follows :

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

That a proper and not a figurative resurrection is intended in this place, if the analogy of prophecy had not made it plain, might be demonstrated from this verse. It must be admitted, unless the resurrection be denied altogether, that the living of the rest of the dead here mentioned—supposing them the same as those mentioned in ver. 12, of which no reasonable doubt can be raised—is a true and literal resurrection. Of course, then, the living of the dead before spoken of—those that are counted "blessed and holy as having part in the first resurrection," in distinction from *that*, the second resurrection,—must be real and literal also. If the one is figurative, the other must be figurative too; and if the one be literally true, so is the other, by every example of the language of prophecy which is at all applicable to the case. We learn, then, from this passage, that a period of a thousand years

* Rom. viii.

intervenes between the first and the general resurrection; and that during the same period the saints reign with Christ upon earth. During the same period, too, we have seen Satan is to be bound. This period is what is known by the term Millennium. Whether this number is to be taken as the other numbers in this vision, a day for a year, so as to denote a period of three hundred and sixty thousand years, or whether it is to be taken strictly, as it is generally understood, we seem to have no means of ascertaining. But whatever be the space of time intended, it evidently marks off a particular period of the reign of Christ and his saints.

That reign has repeatedly been declared, in the strongest and most unequivocal language, to be an everlasting reign. It will not end, therefore, when the thousand years terminate,—when Satan is again loosed,—when the rest of the dead rise,—and this mundane system, as it should seem, is destroyed. A new epocha in the kingdom of Christ and his saints will then indeed take place; but the kingdom continues, and must continue, “for ever, even for ever and ever.”*

This first period of Christ's everlasting kingdom appears to be its reign on this present earth, over the present continued race of men in the flesh, the nations that survive the destruction of the fourth beast,—the nations whom, during a thousand years, Satan is restrained from tempting. What will be the situation of these nations, and of what nature will be the intercourse between glorified spirits and men in the flesh, and what are the great objects of this new dispensation of the manifold grace of God, except so much as may be gathered

* Daniel.

from the scattered hints, here and there, that we find in the Scripture prophecies, is beyond the reach of all human conjecture.

We collected from the ancient prophecies, that, in this new world, there would be an arrangement of the nations of the earth, in subordination to the restored nation of the Israelites.* We thought we discovered, too, contrary indeed to all our preconceived notions — and what can scarcely yet obtain the serious consideration of many — that a branch of the Levitical priesthood is to be restored,† to serve a new sanctuary which is to occupy the site of Mount Sion and Jerusalem. That though other nations are to share in this priesthood and ministry,‡ yet a sacred character is stamped generally on all the tribes of Israel,|| as they dwell around the sacred mount, in their portions on the Holy Land, and “do the service in the city,” which is to be rendered in some sort the spiritual metropolis of the whole earth.

But all this pertains to men in the flesh — to nations upon earth. The dominion of glorified saints is paramount to all this: and their priesthood, for it is positively said that they are priests, is not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchisedec. For it is plain that they inherit as joint heirs with Christ; they are, in some mysterious

* Psalms lxix. 34, &c.; lxxvi.; Isaiah, xxxiii. 20, &c.; xxxv.; li. 11; liv.; lvii. 14, &c.; lx.; Amos, ix. 13, &c.; Hosea, ii. 16; iii. 5; ii. 21, &c.; Micah, iv.; Joel, iii. 17, &c.; Zeph. iii. 11, &c.; Jeremiah, iii. 17; xxx. 18, &c.; xxxi.; xxxii.; xxxiii.; Ezek. xxxiv. 11, &c.; xxxvi.; xxxvii.; Zech. ix. 13; x.

† Jeremiah, xxxiii. 18; compare ver. 21, 22; Ezek. xx. 40, 41, 42, &c.; compare xxxvii. 26, &c.; Malachi, iii. 2, &c.

‡ Isaiah, lxvi. 21.

|| Isaiah, lxi. 6; Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Compare Ezekiel.

manner partners in his throne, and joint dispensers of the efficacy of that one everlasting atonement, in this its last application to a redeemed world. They are the crowned elders that sit around the King of kings and Lord of lords, — they are the cherubim and seraphim that fly at his command. But exactly “what we shall be” “does not yet appear;” it is enough, however, to be told, “that when he shall appear we shall be like him.”

In this reign of Christ and his saints upon earth, the following Scriptures must have their fulfilment: —

He raiseth from the dust a poor exhausted ‘one,’
He exalteth from the ashes one most destitute;

That he may be seated with ‘his’ princes,
Ay, a glorious throne he causeth them to inherit.*

His beloved exult in glory;
They sing triumphantly on their couches:

“The exaltation of God” is on their lips,
And a two-edged sword in their hands;

To execute vengeance on the nations,
Chastisements on the people;

To bind their kings in chains,
Their nobles in fetters of iron;

To execute on them the judgment written:
This honour is for all his beloved.†

I have appointed my holy ‘ones,’ I have also called ‘them,’
Strong in my wrath, exalting in my majesty.‡

And the judgment was given to the saints of the Most High;
And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. ||

* 1 Sam. ii. 8.

† Psalm cxlix. 5, &c.

‡ Isaiah, xiii. 3.

|| Dan. vii. 22.

And I will shake the heavens and the earth,
And the sea and the dry land :

I will shake all the nations,
And they shall come that are the desire of all nations.*

And Jehovah, my Elohim, shall come,
And all his saints with him.†¹

SECTION XXXIII.

*The Continuation of the History of Christ's Kingdom upon
Earth till after the general Judgment.*

THIS fifth monarchy, a heavenly kingdom yet reigning over the earth, is to last, as we have seen, the prophetic period of a thousand years. Then this period closes; not in the *destruction* of the kingdom,—it is a “kingdom that cannot be moved,”—but in an alteration of its dispensation over the earth. Faint however, indeed, must be the ideas which our minds can hope to receive of these far distant objects, in the dispensation of the worlds to come. These few facts, however, we are told by the Spirit of prophecy.

XX 7. “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and

* Haggai, ii. 7.

† Zech. xiv. 5.

¹ That a real resurrection of the saints, to reign upon earth, was a common expectation both of the ancient Jews and early

Christians, see Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, and the authors quoted by him, vol. ii. 348.

Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

What the vision seems to say is this,—that at the time predicted, the devil, who had so long been restrained from tempting mankind, will be permitted once more to exercise his hellish arts, and will succeed:—will be able to combine together, in an attack upon the faithful servants of God, the nations that are in the four quarters of the world. And this attack will be like a second invasion of the Holy Land by the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel; that is to say, it may be compared to the last expedition of the fourth empire on that sacred territory.

Difficulties upon difficulties may here, indeed, be started, far, perhaps, beyond the ability of man to fathom or explain! For here surely, if any where, we must own "we know but in part and prophesy but in part." There appear, however, as far as I can see, no contradictions or implicated impossibilities in the *literal* interpretation of this prophecy.

It has been asked, indeed, Is it not stated as impossible that Satan should deceive to their destruction the very elect?—and are we not to suppose that all the nations of the earth are at this time brought to the saving knowledge of God? Are they not, then, of the very elect, and is it not impossible that they should be deceived? Yet, on Satan's release, the nations are again deceived, "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea?"

This were indeed an insuperable difficulty, if we were constrained to hold that the dispensation of mercy towards the whole human race, under the reign of Christ and his saints, were precisely the same as that dispensation that gathered these saints out of a lost world. But that is by no means certain, nay, is not probable. The chosen of Christ—the remnant according to the election of grace, “redeemed from among men”—“the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, are a *kind of first-fruits of his creatures.*” They are not merely saved as subjects and servants, and restored from the moral and natural effects of the fall; but are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s only begotten Son: are not only to be partakers of his mercies, but to be partners of his throne and of his glory—to be rulers over the rest of their fellow-creatures!—made one with God *in Christ*, as no other creatures are. An excellency of glory, to which creation, in the utmost perfection of intellectual being, whether in man or angel, can afford no approach or resemblance. But the world over which these adopted sons of God are to reign with Christ, their elder Brother, though saved with a great salvation, in time and in eternity, may, in their measure of the gift of grace, fall very short of that glorious height of heavenly majesty to which the elect remnant had been elevated.

It is one thing to save as pardoned subjects or as restored creatures; and another thing, to stamp with the image of the incarnate, glorified Son of God, and anoint to be kings and priests of God and of Christ—to invest with the character of the spouse of God’s own Son! The very idea, indeed, of kings and priests, implies a people to be ruled, a people for whom persons invested with a sacred character are to interpose. And if the

elect saints are to reign for ever, even for ever and ever, there must always be a people, over whom they exercise the functions of their sacerdotal royalty.

Mankind, in its original creation, was a good and most excellent workmanship of the Almighty, proper to inhabit this earth, though all this earth had been a paradise, and sin and natural evil had never entered; — fit to be promoted to higher enjoyments still than flesh and blood could inherit, when the Almighty saw good to let them rest from their works and from their appointed services.

Suppose, then, the whole race of men recovered from the fall and its consequences, and for many ages under the rule of Christ and his glorified saints, answering — to speak after the manner of men — the original purpose of God in their creation, replenishing the earth and subduing it, and, for aught we know, replenishing others of the many mansions in the heavenly Father's house. Suppose all this, — yet if Adam, in Paradise, could fall by the temptation and seduction of the devil, while as yet the perfection of his nature was entire and sinless, and could cast off the dominion of his Maker, — so may the children of Adam, inhabitants of the then renovated world, even supposing the whole of the corruption of their nature to have been repaired. So may *they* be brought, by the arts of the old serpent, to engage in mad rebellion against Christ and his saints. And so it seems, from the prophecy before us, they will. Satan will deceive the last remains of Adam's restored race to their entire destruction and to his own. "They encompassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into a lake of

fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Such is the end of "the father of lies," the enemy of God and of his Christ; and such the end of the last unhappy victims of his seductions!

But what are we to understand by "the camp of the saints?" That they should be found encamped, implies a preparation against hostile attack; and the glorified saints, we may suppose, will know that they have not to wrestle, in this rebellion, with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world. What again are we to understand by "the beloved city?" Is it the new Jerusalem, afterwards described, which comes down out of heaven?—and how can that be the object of hostile attack from mortals?—or what connexion has this city with the holy mountain of the Lord's house and the city, the LORD IS THERE,* to be erected for restored Israel? And is not rather the attack here described levelled against these visible residences of God? All this is a mystery not shown as yet. But it should seem that restored Israel is now faithful with the saints; and there may be other exceptions, though Gog and Magog symbolizes the nations in the four quarters of the earth.

XX. 11. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

We were told before, that "the rest of the dead," as distinguished from "the dead in Christ," who rose at

* Ezekiel. XLVIII. 34.

"the first resurrection," "lived not till the thousand years were over." The awful season is now arrived: it succeeds, as it should seem from the order of the narrative, the judgment of the devil and of the nations of living men whom he had deceived.

AS GOD THE FATHER judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, we are sure that he who sitteth on the great white throne is a symbol of GOD THE SON; all judgment is committed to him "because he is the SON OF MAN." As the GOD-MAN, the King of saints, in the midst of his glorified brethren, he sits in judgment.

666/ 22 126 And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. / And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."

I have no doubt the chapter should have closed here, for this is properly the end of the whole narrative of prophetic events in the book of Revelation; what follows being an explanatory vision, illustrative of what has been before mentioned.

The vision of the Revelation, therefore, closes with a symbolical representation of the final judgment,—of the general resurrection of the dead,—and of the entire destruction and renewal of the earth.

The judgment here described is evidently that of

works. It is the execution of the sentence of the law of works : that day of "wrath, and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," against which, according to the apostle Paul's description, the despisers of mercy, rejecting a Saviour, and continuing in impenitency, are "treasuring up wrath."* The day which the apostle, in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans, so clearly describes, both as it will affect those who have possessed the knowledge of revelation, with their greater responsibilities, and as it will affect those who had no express revelation, with their lesser responsibilities :— "He will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law,"—"in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by" or "according to my Gospel."

It was in the prospect of this judgment that St. Paul has declared, "Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world brought in guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." And this concerns not alone them that are under the law of revelation; "for the Gentiles having not the law, are a law to themselves." "The work" or "matter of the law" is "written in their hearts." These passages and the

* Rom. ii.

whole tenour of Scripture explain clearly, to my mind, the nature and proceeding of this judgment. It is the judgment of works which every mortal must abide, who, not believing in Christ, has "died in his sins:"—"and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works."

One mysterious circumstance, indeed, remains to be considered. Why is the book of life represented as produced in this judgment? since those who were written in the Lamb's book of life, as we have seen, were partakers of the first resurrection; or, being found on earth at the Redeemer's coming, had been separated by him as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats, and had gone away into life eternal.

The judgment that we are now considering, it is evident therefore, concerns not them. Nor, indeed, does it concern the apostates, who were found on earth at Christ's first appearance, for they were then judged and cast into the lake of fire. This judgment, therefore, concerns the *rest of the dead* still in the separate state: that are neither *with Christ in glory*, as the children of the first resurrection—nor have been cast into "the lake of fire," either with the beast and false prophet, at the commencement of the thousand years, or with the devil at the termination of that period. For with respect to all these, judgment has already been awarded.

Why the book of life is produced, also, in this general judgment, perhaps we may be unable to show. It may have reference, however, to those who had been faithful during the reign of the saints upon earth, and were among the survivors in the last defection of their race. It may, again, have reference to the claims of some who will plead an acceptance of the Gospel in arrest of the

judgment of works. Perhaps we may apply the words of our Lord,—“ Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*^{13. 37}

There may, also, be a reference to something more mysterious still. We observe that the dead that are in the SEA are distinguished from those who are under the custody of death and hades—the general symbolical representation of the departed state. It is said that “ death and hades are cast into the lake of fire.” This may possibly mean to designate what will be the issue of the judgment of works, as to all that are in the general abode of the dead, there being none there whose names were on the roll of the book of life: but that with respect to the dead in the SEA it was different. I say the interpretation is possible—understanding by the dead in the sea, not merely such as met their death by drowning, but the souls of them that perished in the great deluge, though the grace towards them abounded not to take them into the ark of Christ’s church, or to exalt them to the same eminence as the saints of the first resurrection. There is, indeed, a passage of Scripture concerning these “ departed spirits,” that cannot be satisfactorily explained but by the revelation of some secrets not yet explored in the unseen worlds.

Speaking of the Redeemer “ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by” or “ in the Spirit,” St. Peter adds, “ By” or “ in which also he went and preached to

* Matt. vii. 22, &c.

the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing."* They had been disobedient *once* — they were not saved as a remnant of the old world with Noah, an heir of the righteousness of faith, whose ark was a type of spiritual baptism. They were "in prison" or "safe keeping:" Christ, after his death in the flesh, went and preached to them — a separate spirit to separate spirits.¹ These facts seem clear: further we know not. These, then, may possibly be the dead that the SEA gives up at this occasion, and the book of life may concern them. But, again, we may remark, "we know but in part, and can but prophesy in part."

The passing away of the first heaven and earth, and the formation of the new, is, doubtless, parallel to that of Peter: "The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." This judgment, in a measure — as far as related to the fourth empire — had taken place at the commencement of Christ's reign upon earth, and there had been a partial renovation, it should seem, in the land of Canaan. But this entire destruction of the earth, and the formation of a new one without a sea, takes not place till after the thousand years are expired.

None can doubt, however, that though the heavens and earth that now are will be dissolved and recreated, yet this does not include the camp of the saints and the beloved city, where the saints had inhabited, and

* Chap. iii. 19.

¹ See Bishop Horsley's Sermon on the descent of Christ into hell.

which, in some sort, had been the object of Satan's attack, when fire came down from God and destroyed all his followers in the flesh. No; we may justly say that was "a city not of this building,"—"not of this creation." It was a "heavenly city," which came down from God; and though it was, in some sense, on the earth, it was not of the earth, or a part of this lower creation. It is no part of the heavens and earth that now are, and which are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Of this holy city we are to be informed more particularly in the remainder of this vision.

SECTION XXXIV.

The Conclusion; containing a symbolical Representation of the Kingdom of Christ, from its first Descent on Earth, with concluding Exhortations.

Chap. xxi. 2. "And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

THE descent of this holy city, which is described below, does not, we should remember, refer to the time posterior to the final judgment. The new Jerusalem had descended at the commencement of the second advent. For in the nineteenth chapter, in connexion with the judgment of the great whore, it was announced, that "the marriage of the Lamb" was come, and "his wife has made herself ready." And 'that' to her it was granted, that she "should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: it

was pronounced, "Blessed is he that is called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." The new Jerusalem, therefore, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, came down to earth at the beginning of the advent, and there it continued, connected with the present earth, during all the thousand years of the reign of Christ and his saints thereon. There Satan found "the beloved city," when at the end of that thousand years he was released. In the last general conflagration, the beloved city, of course, stood entire. It passed safely through the deluge of fire; and, like another ark, landed its inhabitants in a new restored world.

We are to place ourselves, therefore, again at the first resurrection, and at the very commencement of the second advent. "The holy city" or "the bride" is a symbol of the church glorified at the Saviour's coming. The symbol of the beloved city represents his residence, and the residence of his saints, when he establishes his kingdom on the ruins of the fourth empire.

3. "And I heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

The holy city is the tabernacle of God, and that tabernacle will be with men when Christ and his saints shall reign upon earth. He will be as the God of Israel in his sanctuary, and they "priests of God and of Christ,"—the cherubim "between" whom "he dwelleth." And it is probable there will be some immediate connexion between this holy city—"the tabernacle that God doth pitch"—and the sanctuary which restored Israel

is to build, and serve on the holy mountains of Jerusalem: — *

4. “ And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”

Compared with the last chapter of the prophet Isaiah, I understand this of the blessings enjoyed by men in the flesh under the reign of Christ and of his saints. The wiping away the tear — the removing of sorrow, and of pain and death, is descriptive of the improved condition of humanity: thus will he comfort the nations upon earth. With respect to the inhabitants of the holy city, they are glorified spirits, many of them long since removed from the fear of these things, — no longer lower than the angels. Mortality has been swallowed up of life. They are the instruments under their great Head of conveying these blessings to Adam's restored race; whose image once they bore, though now the Lord from heaven is the origin of their new being.

5. “ And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. 6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. And I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake

* See the last chapters of Ezekiel, particularly chap. xxxvii. 26, 27. Compare Jer. xxxi. 33.

that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Before a particular description of the holy city is afforded, this general application of the subject is given; an application which is meant to speak to the church in its present militant state, even to us for whom this book is written. The happy change for which the Redeemer's people are waiting, is promised and pledged with the strongest assurances, — He that is "the Author and Finisher of our faith" speaks to us as God. The emphatic words, "IT IS DONE," seem to me to refer to those fixed decrees of the Almighty, which give a present certainty and reality to things yet future. Thus his people "are saved and called by a purpose and grace of God given us in Christ before the world began:" and we are said even now to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So is HE "Alpha and Omega." And we have been again and again told, that those who shall inherit this holy city are those "who were written in the book of life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world."

But does the question arise in the heart of man, What shall I do to be saved? — How shall I know that I am one of those whose names are in the book of life? The language of the Almighty Saviour meets that question: —

"I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

How clear is the statement here of practical religion! Is the sinner brought to a true sense and deep feeling of his need, and does he submit to the righteousness of

God his Saviour? The spiritual endowments which are destined to convey eternal life, are freely and graciously vouchsafed to him; and, animated by the Spirit of Christ, he overcomes by faith: "For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Every act of faith is a conquest over the world,—it places the empire of things unseen in the room and stead of the dominion of the things that are seen.

Again, would we know who they are that shall *not* inherit the kingdom of God, but be cast into the fire of hell,—for in the present dispensation there is no middle state? We are told, "the fearful and unbelieving." These words are to be taken in connexion with each other. They express the timidity of *unbelief*,—where, for want of trust in God, the professor shrinks from his profession, as the soldier deserts his colours. The mind gives up its hope in the hour of danger, because destitute of confidence in God. Such is the meaning of the phrase in the other two passages of Scripture* where it occurs. The remaining characteristics need no explanation.

By faith, which includes a trust in God, it is the uniform testimony of Scripture, sinful man is saved. If he believe not, he dies in his sins, and the wrath of God abides upon him. He accepts not the medicine of life. But of some characters—persons living in the sins above specified—there can be no question about their unbelief. A more obvious mark of reprobation is enstamped upon them—their notorious and allowed sins persisted in to the last. It may, indeed, be said of some of the redeemed of Christ, "and such were some of you:" but it can be said of them also, "but ye are washed, but ye

* Matt. viii. 26; Mark, iv. 40.

are sanctified, but ye are justified by the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

We are now called to behold more nearly the emblem of the holy city mentioned above; the habitation of glorified saints, who are the sons of God, being the children of the resurrection, and who, manifested with their King, are to bring such blessings to men,— for men in the flesh are also now to be *the people* of that God who owns and shows these risen saints as *his sons* :—

9. " And there came to me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

This circumstance, that one of these seven angels should be the apostle's guide on this occasion, strongly confirms the interpretation, that the descent of the holy city is at the *commencement* of the thousand years, in immediate sequence to the pouring out of the vials that these angels had in their hands.

We shall recollect that, in the first verse of the seventeenth chapter, after the fall of the great Babylon had been symbolized in its chronological order, one of these same angels takes the apostle aside, to show him more distinctly the judgment of the great whore, and a new emblem of the woman riding on the scarlet beast is presented to his view. So now, in the part of the vision before us, after a prophetic history of the church in its millennial state, from its first commencement to its absorption in the everlasting glory, the sacred vision leads us to fix our attention to a more enlarged emblem of this BRIDAL CITY, and of the blessings it diffuses on mankind. " Come here," the angel says, " and I will

show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." In the seventh verse of the nineteenth chapter also, that is, immediately in connexion with the triumphs of the heavenly hosts which were sung on the fall of the mystic Babylon, we had notice,—“ the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride has made herself ready.” This could hardly be interpreted, “ has made herself ready to be manifested a thousand years hence ;” but rather, ready now to receive her Lord. So that I conceive there can be no doubt, but that, what we are now going to contemplate, is a figurative description of that beloved city which the risen saints, who reign with Christ for a thousand years, inhabit ; and which they inhabit at the commencement of the second advent, not, for the first time, after the thousand years are ended :—

10. “ So he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

This seems to describe the city as having existed before with God in heaven : and we shall not fail to recollect, on this occasion, the manner in which the Scripture speaks of the hopes of an ancient patriarch :—“ He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,”—“ But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly ; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”* And also Paul's contrast between the “ Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all,” and “ the Jerusalem that then was, and was in bondage with her children.” And thus again the common hope of the

* Heb. ix. 10—16. Compare chap. xii. 22.

Christian is stated : " But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and into the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," &c. *

11. " Having the glory of God,"—

The visible manifestation of God's presence — the divine Shechinah : —

" And her light" — " her splendour" — " was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

The apostle expresses, as well as he can, the idea depicted in his mind by the heavenly sight ; he compares it to what seemed most like it on earth. The city seemed to him, in the general view he first took of it, in appearance one most precious jewel ; like a jasper, if you could add to that beautiful gem the bright transparency of crystal — or as some, with considerable probability, suppose, we are to understand by jasper stone clear as crystal — like a diamond.

12. " And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel : on the east three gates ; on the north three gates ; on the south three gates ; and on the west three gates."

This bespeaks the city to be the abode of the mystic Israel, the hundred and forty and four thousand which were represented as sealed out of all the tribes of Israel :

14. " And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in" — or " on them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Clearly telling us, that this city is the abode of that

* Heb. xii. Compare Rev. iii. 12.

church which was built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

15. " And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof."

This measuring, with such exactness, the holy city, speaks, to my mind, that this city is not a mere symbol of the church, as a woman or a bride might be, but is, in some sort, a model or actual representation of the future residence of the blessed : —

16. " And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel."

Certainly great difficulties present themselves to our view, in the literal interpretation of this part of the vision; but no difficulties greater than might have been expected, when, to us on earth, some notion of heavenly things is attempted to be conveyed. It is not a city of *this building*, we are to recollect: it is the holy, the glorious habitation of spiritual beings, brought into contact with this earth on which we now dwell. John saw the representation of it in the vision, descending from heaven to earth: we need not, then, be surprised that the *height* of the fabric, as well as its length and breadth, should be noticed, which could not indeed apply to any earthly city. And taking the measure in its utmost extent, supposing the twelve thousand stadia to have measured but one side of the magnificent structure, and bearing in mind that these stadia together would be

much more than a thousand miles; yet still, why should it be deemed incredible that God should construct such a mansion, or suspend it so as to come in contact with the earth? We are not obliged to suppose it constructed of the same materials as this earthly globe on which we dwell. It appears to the apostle as though it were all made of jewels; that is, he can compare it to nothing he, in common with his readers, had seen, but these most precious stones.

18. " And the building of the wall of it was of jasper."

As he had described its general appearance before like jasper, if you conceive to be added to that gem the brightness of crystal; in short, like diamond: and the city was pure gold, like unto glass; that is to say, if you could destroy the opacity of that beautiful metal, and give it the transparency of glass!

19. " And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third chalcedony; the fourth an emerald; the fifth sardonyx; the sixth sardius; the seventh a chrysolite; the eighth beryl; the ninth a topaz; the tenth a chrysophrasus; the eleventh a jacinth; the twelfth an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every gate was one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

This language is certainly designed to convey to the waiting people of God a grand idea of this city, and, by a reference to earthly things, to enable them to form a high conception of the beauty and magnificence of this "mansion" of God—"the heavenly Jerusalem." Of that better creation we can only be made to form any, even the most faint idea, by a comparison of things below.

The fondness of the eastern nations for jewels and precious stones is well known; and indeed these beautiful productions have ever formed the admiration of mankind in every age and country. In this present creation, however, nature has been very sparing of these rich and beautiful productions; so much so indeed, that it requires the wealth of monarchs and of nations to accumulate any considerable portion of them. A piece of some of the gems, which are mentioned, that you could hold in your hand, could hardly be estimated at its proportionate value! But here is a whole city—a little world rather—built altogether of these precious materials! nay, with materials more beautiful still, with what looked like pellucid gold and diamond!!

22. “ And I saw no temple there; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

The immediate presence of God the Saviour renders the whole city a sanctuary. No part need be set apart from common uses, for all the employments and occupations of these blessed inhabitants are altogether holy, and they abide continually in the *immediate presence* of their Lord:—

23. “ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God lightened it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Isaiah had prophesied respecting the restored Jerusalem:—

It shall not continue to be to thee the sun for a light by day,
Nor on her shining shall the moon give light to thee.

Thy sun shall no more go down,
Nor shall thy moon be withdrawn.

For Jehovah shall be to thee an everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

We had reason to infer, from this and other prophecies, that the possession of "a light above the brightness of the sun," beaming from the manifested glory of Jehovah, would distinguish, in "the world to come," the site of the holy hills of Jerusalem, — the mountain of the Lord's house, occupied, as we learned in Ezekiel, by the buildings of a holy temple, and served by the Levitical priesthood. The circumstance that this mountain enjoys the same glorious light as the heavenly Jerusalem, and other hints scattered here and there in the sacred oracles, lead me to conclude, that there will be some sort of communication in this place between the spiritual world of saints that inhabit the beloved city and this holy temple at Zion, where earthly priests and ministers will keep the charge of the courts of the Lord, and worship at the door of his heavenly tabernacle.* So that of this mysterious spot all mankind will have to take up the language of the patriarch, — "How dreadful is this place!" "This is none other than the house of God! this is the gate of heaven!"

24. "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"The nations of them that are saved," I humbly con-

* Compare Ezekiel.

ceive, are the nations on earth which will escape the destruction of the fourth empire. Over these nations the saints who inhabit this city are to rule. "The kings of the earth bringing their glory and honour into the heavenly city," I understand to be the surrendering up to Christ and his risen saints, of all the royal character and sovereign power. The gates standing always open certainly denotes an uninterrupted intercourse between this heavenly city and the world it governs. In what manner this intercourse is formed, is, perhaps, beyond the reach of our imagination. I cannot, however, but think the grand channel of communication is through the holy places in the land of Canaan. For we saw that holy land, in former prophecies, meted out and divided among a peculiar people, the descendants of the patriarchs, to whom, in respect of all the surviving nations of the earth, was given a sacred and ministerial character: and all circumstances seemed to represent that nation and that land as forming, in some ineffable manner, the medium of communication between the Creator and the renovated earth: the last visible link, perhaps we may say, where the communication leaves this lower world and enters into the immediate presence of the GREAT KING. May we say,—The holy sanctuary on the mountains of Zion and Jerusalem is the gate of the palace, where the king doth sit in judgment; while the heavenly Jerusalem may be compared to the interior of his royal habitation?

And though the earthly Canaan, and city, and temple, are not, nor can possibly be, this heavenly habitation of glorified saints, yet, from what we have read of the changes to be produced in that highly destined country, which is to be "the glory of all lands," we may conclude,

that, of all earthly scenes, it will be made most like the Paradise of God above, and will communicate its blessings to the world around, the nations of which are even represented as going there on their annual pilgrimage.*

Chap. xxii. 1. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

The water from the throne, and the tree of life, may represent the conveyance of spiritual sustenance to support the life of spiritual beings. As such it may symbolize the enjoyments of the risen saints. But I conceive all this pertains also to the heavenly blessings of which the inhabitants of the holy city are to be the dispensers to a reconciled world below. In the tree of life, restored to mankind, we seem to contemplate the bringing back of the times of Eden and the enjoyments of Paradise. This tree was originally planted in the midst of the garden, and man partook of its fruit, the pledge, perhaps the sustenance of his better life. On his fall, he is prohibited from touching this fruit. But the tree is mysteriously represented as placed in the custody of cherubim: "And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."† This, I believe, represents not only the present prohibition of mankind from the tree of life, but affords also a typical representation of the mode in which a future restoration was to be regulated. The cherubim at the east of Eden, in the

* Isaiah, lx.; Zech. xiv. 16.

† Gen. iii. 24.

Jewish tabernacle, and in the visions of the prophets, are all emblems of the ministry of the risen saints who attend upon the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

It is mysteriously added, "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." There are therefore, unquestionably, nations whose health still needs restoratives. These, then, are the nations upon earth under the heavenly reign. And these leaves of the tree of life which grow in the beloved city of the saints for their healing, and, perhaps, the tree of life altogether, are emblematical of the blessings that flow from the reign of the saints, to "the nations" whom "God will comfort upon earth."

3. "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Not only a thousand years: this is only a first period of the reign of the immediate ministers of the Lamb. The holy city, the bride of the Lamb, is never to be destroyed—never to be put away. And so in Daniel we read, that the dominion to be set up immediately on the destruction of the fourth empire, was to be "an everlasting kingdom," and its dominion that which shall not be destroyed:—

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."

"The Lord God of the holy prophets" is clearly, from the first chapter, the SON:—"And He,"—Jesus

Christ—"sent and signified by an angel to his servant John."*

7. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

This is the message the angel repeats from HIM that sent him:—

8. "And I, John, saw these things, and heard them."

Some he saw in the visions, some were described unto him.

"And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then said he to me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

So far is the address of the angel, the apostle's instructor. God only is to be the object of adoration, or, as it is sometimes said, "God and the Lamb." Angels acknowledge themselves our brethren. One real angel, we shall recollect, attends the apostle all the time of the vision. He sees many visionary angels and representations of heavenly beings, of God himself, that is, of the SON seated on his throne; and these visionary appearances discourse with him, but one real angel attends him to show him the vision. And the apostle is fully aware of the difference between his guide and these visionary appearances. He never attempts to worship them; but understanding the vision to be finished, he is ready to be betrayed into this act of idolatry towards the angel that had showed him these things.

But again, the emblem on the throne seems to address the apostle : —

10. “ And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand.”

Daniel, we shall recollect, at the close of his prophetic visions, was addressed in a different manner : — “ But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end.” The Christian church is to consider the time as near at hand ; and the prophecies of the Revelation, as we have seen, *began* immediately to be fulfilled after the date of its manifestation. Our Lord proceeds : —

11. “ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

I conceive this to mean, that at this present time indeed, while the Lord waiteth to be gracious to his people, while the work of God is in execution, accomplishing the purpose of his grace, many “ of unjust are made just before God ;” many filthy and abominable are washed and sanctified : so also many of the righteous offend and need to look to Christ, their propitiation from day to day, are continually contracting defilement, which needs often repeated purifyings and sanctifyings. But the day of Christ’s appearing once arrived, this dispensation closes with respect to the professing church. “ The world to come” we are not now to take in view. With respect to the Gospel church, no more sinners are converted to God : and the saints are presented perfected in holiness, to sin no more. “ The master of the house has risen and shut to the door.” Those that were ready

have gone in with him to the marriage: the foolish virgins will knock in vain without for admission.

12. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his work shall be."

This certainly respects the living world of men. It is spoken in regard of the manner in which the day of the Lord overtakes them. If, according to the preceding verse, they are found at that day working "the work of God," among those who are justified by faith in Christ, are sanctified through his Spirit, the love of God poured abroad in their hearts, they will receive the happy welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But if they are found at that day among the unjust and filthy, unbelieving, and therefore yet in their sins, and strangers to the love of Christ, they must hear the awful sentence, "Depart, ye cursed," &c.

Such is the import of the passage before us. From other passages we might add, that besides this general separation of the goats and sheep—of the tares and wheat—of the good and bad fish, there will also at this day be a reward, as the work of each shall be, with respect to Christ's ministers and public servants. But this is not immediately in the view of the passage, and it is certain it has no relation to a judgment of works after death, at the general resurrection.

By their fruits, we know them, now, whom Christ would own or disown if he were to come. By these fruits, they are justified in the sight of men; and by these, we judge, where they go, when, as individuals, they are removed from the professing world below. "Every tree that beareth not good fruit is hewn down and

cast into the fire." But those who, to use the frequent language of this prophecy, are written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world—with respect to them it is written, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should stand." Neither, then, will the death of the individual nor the coming of Christ find *them* unmeet or unprepared. They have from the heart obeyed the form of doctrine delivered to them, and they are taught of God to love one another, and "faith, which worketh by love," is the grand criterion of character:—

14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to"—or perhaps "authority over"—"the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

This contrasts the inhabitants of the holy city, not with the nations over whom it reigns in the world to come, but is spoken in relation to the professing church, in the day that the holy city descends out of heaven from God. They that sleep in Christ are there already: and they that are Christ's at his coming will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. It is *then* they enter through the gates into the beloved city; and those of his professed church that are left out, are the unhappy persons here described. The angels gather out of his kingdom all that offend and that do iniquity, and bind them in bundles to burn them.

The keeping the commandments of God in this connexion must have reference to the situation of a fallen sinner, with respect to the Gospel of his salvation. By

the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in the sight of God. If any man, therefore, be judged according to his works, he cannot have a right to the tree of life. Nay, if his works are his dependence, if he is seeking for salvation on these grounds, he is utterly lost,—“As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.”* Nay, more, if having embraced the Gospel scheme, he engraft thereon, like the Galatians, the law of works and of ordinance pertaining to the flesh, so that his final salvation, or his perfection, is made to hinge on works of righteousness that he shall do—this, too, if persisted in, is a damnable doctrine: “Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace. For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Nor can we be at a loss, from the Scriptures of God, to ascertain what does give a right to everlasting life,—“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; *therefore* are they before the throne of God,—the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water.”

An interest in the Saviour gives this right; but if the question be, Who, among living men, in prospect of the Redeemer's coming, have this right or authority to take of the tree of life? certainly the answer must be, they that do his commandments. “In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the wicked one.” But in the application of the text before us, especial regard must be had to our Lord's answer to one who asked him, What must I do that I may work the works of

* Gal. iii. 10.

God,— “The work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent.” This, in the business of a sinner’s salvation, must be first considered. But if the faith, that is professed, does not work by love, and becomes not “the victory that overcometh the world,” it is not true faith; it cannot save.

For the term “dogs,” compare Phil. iii. 2, and also Matt. vii. 6, and xv. 27. The dog was an animal ceremonially unclean; as such, it is a symbol of those who, according to the mystic rites of the spiritual temple, are profane and reprobate. In the first passage referred to, “dogs” stand opposed to “the circumcision who worship God in *spirit*.” And I have no doubt, that “sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters,” have all an immediate reference to the corrupters of the faith, who, in their apostasy, became the persecutors of the faithful, in order to introduce their abominable idolatries. “Whoremongers and adulterers,” in the moral import of these terms, “God will judge;” but the terms in this prophecy have generally a spiritual signification. The last phrase also, “every one that maketh and loveth a lie,” will receive strong elucidation from 2 Thess. ii., where the apostle is speaking of those delusions which are to try the sincerity of professors in the latter days. These are the lies of which the admonition treats.

16. “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root,”—or, “shoot,”—“and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

The general invitation to sinners—that is, to those

who, "recovering from the snare of the devil, receive repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth," is clearly expressed in this place. "The Spirit," who spake by the prophets, invites by the Scriptures, which he has inspired. "The bride," or church, speaks by her ministers and public institutions. Every one that knows the joyful sound is to unite his voice, to invite sinners around him, to come to Christ that they may be saved. "Yea, let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The question is not, here, Who maketh willing? but, as a matter of fact, every one that is made willing, and is athirst, is invited: "Come, and welcome."

It may be true—it must be true, for Christ has said it—that "none can come unto him, unless the Father, that has sent HIM, draw him." But it is true likewise, that "every one that doth come unto him, he will in nowise cast out." Christ's commission to his ministers is to go and preach the Gospel to every creature; and while this is doing, if, in point of fact, a man be not straitened in his own heart, he will find no impediment to his reception by the Saviour.

18. "For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man take away from the words of this book, God will take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

What an awful close do these words form to the word of God! For we may, in some measure, regard it, not

only as the close of the Revelation, but of the whole of the inspired volume! How does it admonish us to keep to the written word of God,—to study it, that we may embrace the whole of its doctrines and precepts; and may not suffer any human system, or vaunted experience, or prudence of man, to induce us to omit any part of it, or qualify it with additional restrictions of our own! Especially does it admonish us, to expect no more prophetic visions; and all pretenders to visions and secret revelations are put at once under the ban of its awful curse!

Finally, we are warned of the near approach of the Saviour; and though, at the time of the vision, the season appointed for his public appearance was ages remote, yet every individual, interested in the event, might speedily expect an occurrence, that would bring home the eternal world to him with all its fixed and unalterable consequences. Thus it is with me and with my readers. Therefore, the continual cry to each of us is,—*Watch, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh!—Surely I come quickly!*

May we, as among the number that “love his appearing,” be able to say,—Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Again I pray, “May the Lord direct all our hearts into the love of God and patient waiting for Jesus Christ! may He preserve our hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of CHRIST with *all his saints!*”

THE END.



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